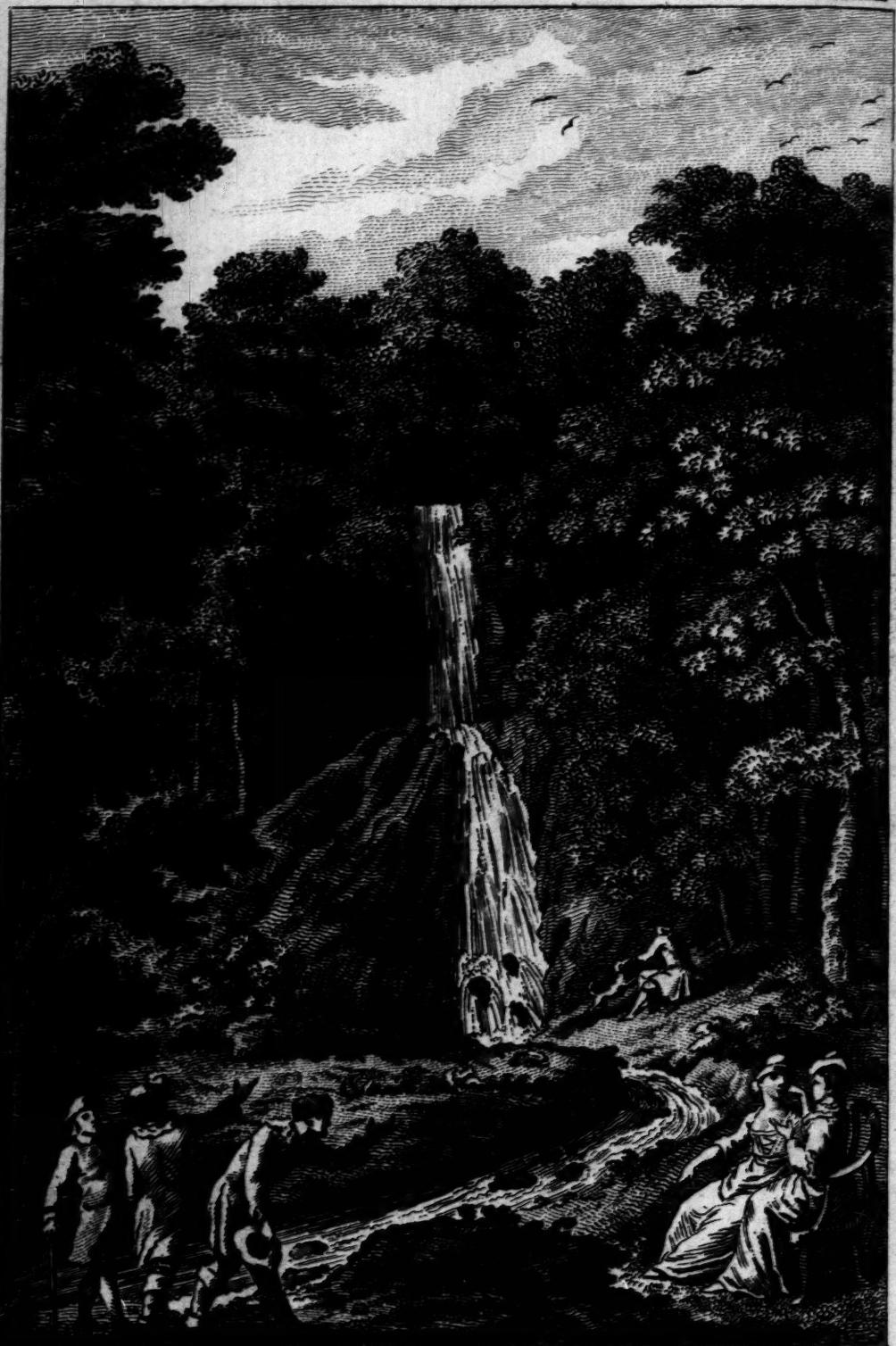


FRONTISPICE.

Vol. II

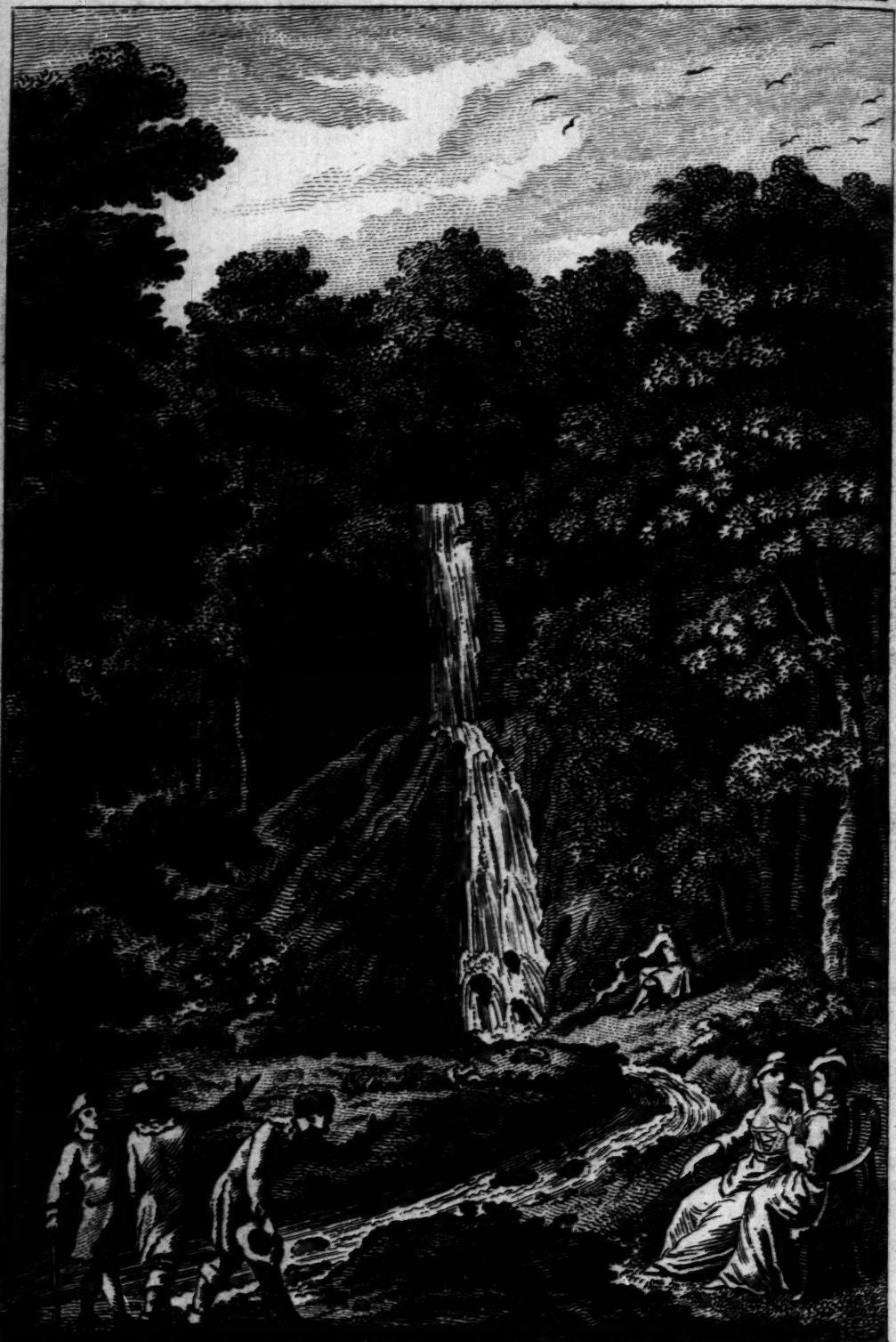


C.W.B. del.

C.G. Sc.

FRONTISPICE.

Vol. II



C.W.B. del.

C.G. Sc.

COLUMELLA;

OR, THE

DISTRESSED ANCHORET.

A

COLLOQUIAL TALE.

By the EDITOR of the SPIRITUAL QUIXOTE.

V O L. II.

— — — — — *Hic onus horret ;
Hic subit & perfert. Aut virtus nomen inane est,
Aut decus & pretium recte petit experiens vir.*

HOR.

L O N D O N :

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M.DCC.LXXIX.

АДАМУС

ЕНТ АО

ГИРОВАНИЯ



COLUMELLA, &c.

CHAP. I.

THE next morning the triumvirate rose earlier than usual; and after a slight breakfast, set out for Stourhead, the beautiful seat of Mr. H——re. After travelling a mile or two on the great road, they were overtaken by an hard-featured

2 COLUMELLA; or,

man, upon a good horse, with an housing of leopard's skin ; who saluted them with great freedom, but with a very rough aspirate : " Good morrow to you, Sir ; good morrow to you, Mr. Milward ; good morrow to you, gentlemen all : it's a very fine morning."

Hortensius and Atticus taking him for some gentleman's valet de chambre, behaved with a distant reserve. The stranger however, nothing dismayed by a cool reception and short answers, entered boldly into a variety of subjects ; and at length fell upon religion. On which head, after observing how much Popery had spread itself in the nation of late, he concluded with an outrageous paradox, " That most of the

great men in England since the restoration, and particularly the late Lord Orford, had died Papists in their hearts." And before any one had time to answer him, my gentleman took his leave, turning into some white gates which led up an avenue to an old seat near the road.

As soon as he was gone, "D—mn the fellow," says Columella, "what an uproar he has made in a few minutes! he is chaplain to a Roman catholic gentleman who lives at the end of that avenue: the country people call him *the Frenchman*; tho' I believe he was not born in France, but an Englishman, educated at some of their seminaries there." "No," says Atticus (who understood the language critically)

4 COLUMELLA; or,

he's no Frenchman; but I fancy he is a Scotchman bred in France."

" You are both of you mistaken," replied Hortensius, " I know the brogue too well; he's an Irish jesuit, bred at St. Omer: I have met with more than one of them in London; and it is a way of talking they are got into, to magnify, in a strain of lamentation, the great progress which Popery makes amongst us; which they would have you think some argument of the truth of its doctrines; and that it may prepossess some ignorant people in its favour. But tho' they take infinite pains to propagate their superstitious tenets, I hope, as good sense and sound reasoning seem to prevail in the world, the absurdities

of

of Popery will lose ground, and be confined within yet narrower bounds."

When the three gentlemen arrived at Stourhead, Atticus and Hortensius were seized with the utmost rapture at the beauty of the valley, the simplicity of the mansion-house, with the neat and stately appearance of the whole. The beautiful form and extent of the water, surrounded by such noble hills and woods, adorned with such a number and variety of elegant buildings, and other striking objects, fixed them in a silent astonishment for some time. Columella was pleased with the agreeable effect which he observed the view had upon his friends ; and he first broke silence, by saying, this was the only mag-

6 COLUMELLA; or,

nificent place which he preferred to his own diminutive retreat.

After they had examined the scene however in many different points of view, and began to observe the particular objects more attentively; Atticus took the liberty, with a modest diffidence, to criticize the *modern taste* of jumbling together so many buildings of such a different style of architecture, and of ages and nations so remote from each other.

"Nothing," says he, "can exceed the delicacy of that rotundo which you call the Pantheon, nor the Temple of Apollo on the opposite hill. And when I contemplate those objects, and one or two more in the Roman style, I could fancy

The Distressed Anchoret.

7

fancy myself upon a visit to Cicero, Lucullus, or some ancient Roman in the politest ages of the Commonwealth ; but the sight of a Chinese bridge, or a Turkish pavilion, wakes me from my reverie, or rather makes me fancy myself in a dream, where things incongruous are often huddled together, one knows not how.

“ Ut nec pes nec caput uni

“ Reddatur forma.”

“ Why,” says Hortenfius, “ I have often been struck with scruples of this kind, in most of the fine places which I have lately seen ; so that this criticism does not particularly affect the beautiful scene before us.”

B 4

“ By

" By no means," replies Atticus ; " I only speak of it in general as the taste of the times, which tho' more natural as well as elegant than ever prevailed in England before, yet for want of some fixed principles, a luxuriant fancy is in danger, I think, of relapsing again into Gothicism and absurdities.

" In the justly celebrated gardens of Stour, we are led from an hermitage to a temple of Venus, and from St. Augustine's cave to the temple of Bacchus, and thence to a Saxon temple, and so on. *Quelle melange !*

" We should fix upon some particular style of design in laying out our place, whether Roman, Gothic, Chinese, or plain English, and in some

The Distressed Anchoret. 9

some measure adhere to it. As for the beautiful landscape before us, it is as near perfection as possible, and if I had the honour of being acquainted with the worthy possessor, all the advice I should give him, would be, *manum de tabulâ!* The picture is as highly finished already as it can be, and Nature only seems in danger of being oppressed by Art, and to labour under such a profusion of decorations."

" Well," says Columella, a little piqued at this freedom, and jealous of the honour of his own country, " I think we ought to suspect our own taste, rather than criticise a place so universally admired; however, I'll now conduct you to a scene, which I am sure you will

B 5 acknowledge

10 COLUMELLA; or,

acknowledge to be the most beautiful, and the most perfect of its kind you ever saw."

They now came down to the grotto, which is situated at the side of the lake, amidst weeping willows, and other wild aquatic shrubs, and shaded by a rising bank of ancient oaks which hang over it, and from which mount a copious stream huddles down and supplies the grotto. This is composed of two or three gloomy arches, formed of large rocks, spar, and perforated stone; the middle arch is terminated by a river-god, larger than the life; and in a side arch, a beautiful nymph of white marble, reposing on a large pedestal in the midst of an oval basin of water, clearer than crystal, with Mr.

Pope's

Pope's translation of the Latin inscription, adapted to the very place and figure.

"Nymph of the grot, these sacred springs I
keep,
"And to the murmurs of these waters sleep.
"Ah! spare my slumbers, gently tread the
cave;
"Or drink in silence, or in silence lave."

The two strangers were quite enchanted with this grotesque scene: and Atticus said, he should only wish to have a little habitable room or cell added to the grotto, to command the view of the lake, the cascade, and the surrounding woods; where he would spend the greatest part of the day in reading and meditation. "Perhaps you might," replies Hortensius, "whilst the no-

velty lasted, and then you would desert it, and give it up to the fwallows, bats, and robin-red breasts, as that sort of summer-houses generally are ; and I should find you, even in the month of July, reading and meditating by a good parlour fire."

C H A P. II.

THE company now proceeded to the Pantheon, filled with some antique and several fine modern statues ; then to the temple of Apollo, and the other buildings in view. After which they ascended gently through winding glades, shaded by the finest forest trees, up the hill to the convent, which is a most elegant Gothic building,

building, embosomed in the deepest recesses of the surrounding woods, adorned with painted glass, and pictures of the several orders of nuns and of saints, painted by that respectable artist Mr. Hoare of Bath, and with furniture adapted to the style of the edifice.

Whilst the rest of the company were viewing the curiosities of the place, Hortensius, for some reason or other, had strolled at some distance behind the convent, where he spied a young wood-nymph crofs the glade, with a pitcher of water in her hand. She was a genteel-shaped girl, and seemed about fifteen; and though her tresses hung loose about her neck, and her coats were grown too short for her, yet they shewed her

her limbs to such advantage, and gave her such an artless appearance, that a young Templar could not view so amiable a figure without some emotions of pleasure, which tempted him to approach her with an eager curiosity: but the poor girl was so frightened, that she threw down her pitcher, and ran like a young fawn, and made her escape to a little cottage, almost concealed by the wood; whither Hortensius ventured to pursue her.

The cottage stood in a little garden, which was over-run with weeds, though here and there a rose-bush, and one or two currant-trees, forced their way through the wild convolvulus's that twisted round them. When he came to the house, it seemed

seemed to be the habitation of poverty and wretchedness. A tall, fair woman, however, who appeared to be between thirty and forty, dressed in a gown which seemed to have been silk, with her hair about her ears and her breasts almost bare, was sitting in a broken chair, and combing a little boy's head, with another child asleep in the cradle, and a third hanging in a swing. She looked at Hortensius with a mixture of anger and confusion, as being ashamed and vexed at being seen in such a wretched situation. After a kind speech or two from Hortensius however, she got up, her features softened, and she discovered amidst her rags, an air and manner of speaking which a little surprised him, as also

the

the remains of a good face, though distress and vexation had rather soured her features. After some unfortunate enquiries from Hortenfius, she told him, that she had been bred up in a manner somewhat different from what her present circumstances and appearance might give him room to imagine. In short, on Hortenfius's urging her to acquaint him with some particulars of her story, she with some reluctance thus began.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

Love in a Cottage; or, Miss —'s Story.

"**M**Y father," says she, " was a younger brother of a gentleman's family, and was bred to a genteel business in London; but soon after he was out of his apprenticeship, a distant relation died, and unfortunately left him a small estate of about five hundred pounds a year. I say unfortunately, because, instead of pursuing his profession in town, as in prudence he should have done, and increasing his fortune, he retired into the country and spent it. He married a genteel woman of a good family, but of a small fortune; and

and living the idle life of a country 'Squire, keeping dogs, horses, and a great deal of middling company, he soon dissipated his slender revenues, and in a few years was reduced to a state of indigence, which broke my poor mother's heart; and he himself took to drinking, and died by the time he was five and forty.

" During our prosperity however, my mother had taken care to give me and my two brothers a tolerable education; but when she died we were left to the care of servants, and indeed spent as much time as we pleased amongst them in the kitchen, as my father was generally engaged with one or two sottish companions in the parlour.

" My father always took a pride in

in having genteel men-servants about him, whom he expected always to appear *clean*, as he called it; so that the butler and footman were always dressed and powdered out like gentlemen.

" We had one footman in particular, who appeared so genteel in his person, blew the German flute so well, and even danced a minuet with so good an air (for I once saw him do it) that I really suspected him to be some young gentleman in disguise. For though my mother would never let me read romances, yet I had read several plays, and a good deal of poetry, which I found in my father's study; and was particularly pleased with the *Beaux Stratagem*, *Love in a Village*, with Prior's *Henry*

ry and Emma, and Pope's Eloisa to Abelard, and the like romantic tales.

" In short, Sir, I saw so little difference between the external appearance of this man, when he was dressed, and that of several country gentlemen who came to the house, but what was in *his favour*, that I was easily drawn in to listen to the nonsense, which the familiar footing that we were upon encouraged him to talk to me; and this inspired him with hopes which he would not have presumed to entertain, but from my imprudence."

" Why," says Hortensius, " your mistake was natural enough; and I have often wondered that any gentlemen who have daughters, and much more any old gentlemen who have

have young wives, should be so fond of having about them the handsomest fellows they can find; and instead of confining them to their liveries, and other marks of their servile condition, should suffer them to dress more like gentlemen than themselves. But please to proceed in your story."

"The sequel of my story," says she, "is pretty obvious, and contains but a few more particulars. I must acquaint you however, that about this time, a young clergyman of good fortune, who had lately got a living in our neighbourhood, and who came often to dine with my father, saw me, and liked me; and actually made overtures of marriage to my father; who, as he was conscious

22 COLUMELLA; or,

fcious he could not give me two hundred pounds for my fortune, listened *eagerly* to his proposal: but as my affections were pre-engaged, and the young clergyman was rather a plain person, I saw so much difference in the mere outward appearance of my two lovers, that I very foolishly gave the preference to Mr. William; and thought I could live *happier* in a *cottage* with the man I loved, than in the greatest splendor with one whom I fancied I disliked. I was continually repeating to myself, "Fame, wealth, or titles, what are you to Love?"

"As I could give no other reason
for

for refusing the clergyman's offer, my father was extremely angry, as he had good reason; and even threatened me with the severest effects of his resentment, if I did not comply. But while the affair was in agitation, my poor father was attacked by a violent fever, and died in a few days.

C H A P. IV.

"**A**S my father had made no will, I expected to come in for a share of what money and personal estate he had left behind him. But it was soon discovered that there was little more than enough to pay his

his creditors. So that my elder brother (whom he had put apprentice to a linen-draper in London) was not able even to set up his trade; and is at this time only a foreman in the shop: my younger brother is a clergyman, but has only a curacy to depend upon; not one of those *friends* who shared my father's fortune in his prosperity, having taken any notice of him. As I was now my own mistress, and had not above fifty pounds for my fortune, I thought myself very happy that William proved true to his engagements; who, tho' he might have expected me to have been a more advantageous match to him, yet as I believe he really loved me,
YAN OF SIGHORS HAD DIED SINCE
did

did not use me with less kindness
on that account.

" As my fortune was just sufficient to buy a little furniture, and to stock a little shop, we opened one in a market-town, not far from my native place; where we went on tolerably well for some time: but as William had a taste for sociable company, and all sorts of country diversions, he was always from home; and I being very awkward in the management of my shop, we soon discovered that we traded to great disadvantage. In short, in a very few years we found that a great part of our money was spent; and we thought it prudent to give up our house and shop, and retire to a cottage in the country, at a small rent; where William pretended he could

get more, and live better, by taking a little garden ground, and by his own labour, than he could do in a town.

“ After having lived for two or three years in a dirty part of a miserable country town, I was much pleased with the thoughts of retiring again to shades and solitude ; and formed to myself romantic ideas of a neat cottage and a little garden in the country : and as I flattered myself I should have more of my husband’s company in a lonely place, I was quite happy in the prospect of such a retreat.

“ But here, alas ! I soon found my hopes of happiness again disappointed. My husband soon grew tired of home and continual labour, and let his garden run to ruin, as you

see it, Sir. He now and then did a day's work for the 'Squire's gardener ; but as soon as he received his weekly pay, he perhaps bought me and the children a couple of loaves, and spent the rest in an ale-house. My brothers now and then contrive to send me a guinea, but that answers no other end than to make my husband idle for a week or fortnight, 'till it is all spent. He is now gone to a cock-fighting, with half-a-crown in his pocket. If he should happen to have good luck, and win a few shillings, I shall not see him again for a week : if he loses his money, he will probably come home fuddled, and use me ill ; then perhaps he will work for two or three days, and then be gone again. And this, Sir, is the comfortable

ayhd

C 2

life

life which I lead in this *delightful solitude.*"

Hortensius was greatly affected with the poor woman's unhappy situation ; and as the young nymph who had left her pitcher of water, and escaped to the cottage, having smoothed her locks and adjusted her tattered dress as well as it would admit of, stood behind her mother peeping at the stranger, he called her to him, and slipped two half crowns into her hands ; for which the mother was going to thank him, but her tears bursting out, she put her apron to her eyes, and turned away her face ; which moving sight made Hortensius hurry out of the house, and return to his company with great expedition, reflecting on the melancholy effects of a young lady's

lady's indulging so romantic and imprudent a passion.

C H A P. V.

WHEN Hortensius was got back to the mimic convent, he found his friends impatient for his return, as they wanted to proceed in their perambulation. They began to rally him upon his absence, hinting at his supposed pursuit of some rural wood-nymph. But Hortensius shaking his head with a melancholy air, told them of the distressed scene which he had been a witness to; and enquired of the gardener who attended them, whether he knew any thing of the family which he had mentioned. The gardener said there was such a fa-

mily as he had described, who lived in a cottage on the common, and that he had sometimes employed the man in their works, but he did not know any thing of their circumstances ; that however he would enquire into the particulars of their distress ; and he did not doubt but something would be done for the poor woman's relief, as Mr. H—— he was sure took as much pleasure in an act of humanity, as in building a temple, or in adding any other embellishment to his place.

They now proceeded thro' the woods, to the noble tower which Mr. H—— has built on the very spot where Alfred the Great is supposed to have erected his standard, when he emerged from his retreat

in

in the isle of Athelney *, to oppose the Danes. The tower is near 200 feet high, and commands a most extensive and romantic prospect of the neighbouring counties ; and even of the Bristol channel towards the west, and of the English channel towards the south.

When the three friends had sufficiently gratified their curiosity at Stourhead, they returned homewards by Maiden Bradley, Longleat, and that part of the country.

* The inscription on a colossal statue of King Alfred is, I think, thus :

“ In memory of Alfred the Great ;
“ Who on this spot erected his standard against
“ Danish invaders.

“ He instituted juries ; established a militia ;
“ created and exerted a naval force ;
“ The founder of the English monarchy
“ and
“ Liberty.”

As they passed by the seat of the D— of S—, Atticus and Hortensius were a little surprised to see the residence of the second duke in the kingdom make an appearance not more splendid than that of many a private gentleman. Columella however observed to them, that this branch of the family had a more ancient seat at Bury-castle, in Devonshire; and that Maiden Bradley was only an hunting-seat, built by the great Sir E— S—, when Speaker of the House of Commons: and he further observed, that there were many noble apartments in this house; and that the place itself would have a very different aspect, when those naked hills were fringed with wood, and that piece of water extended and serpentized, according to his Grace's plan.

plan, and the whole laid out in the modern taste.

" But the D—," says he, " not having submitted to inoculation, nor had the small-pox, lives almost sequestered from the world; and buries in obscurity a great deal of good-sense and knowledge of mankind, and many amiable qualities, which would appear to great advantage in a more conspicuous light.

" His Grace however," adds he, " entertains his friends hospitably at home, and supports the dignity of a peer abroad, when obliged to attend the Court, or the House of Lords; and by this retired way of life, has unavoidably accumulated a very ample fortune, which, in the next generation, will support the

honour of that noble family in its ancient splendor and magnificence."

" Well," says Hortensius, " every Englishman ought to reverence the memory of Sir Edward Seymour; for we are obliged to him principally for bringing in, and carrying thro' the house, the *habeas corpus* act, that palladium of English liberty."

" Yes," says Atticus, " and we are equally obliged to him for promoting the revolution. For though the Tories have been censured by party-writers as favouring arbitrary power and non-resistance, yet Sir Edward, who was the head of the party, was the first person of any consequence who joined the Prince of Orange at Exeter; which if he had

had not done, the Prince declared he would have gone back to Holland."

"Why," says Hortensius, "I could never discover the difference between a real Whig and a sensible Tory: for though the violent of each party charge each other respectively with arbitrary or republican principles; yet the honest men of each side seem only desirous of maintaining the just balance between the prerogative of the crown, and the liberty of the subject; which has always been esteemed the perfection of our constitution."

About an hour's ~~ride~~ further brought them in sight of Longleat, the seat of Lord Weymouth. The approach to Longleat from Maiden Bradley, is under a noble gate-way,

36 COLUMELLA; or,

in the style of a triumphal arch, which stands on an eminence, and looks down an avenue of a mile in length, formed by the uniting of several groups of oaks, and other forest trees. This directs the eye to a most magnificent front, built about Harry the eighth's time. A grand piece of water serpentizes amidst extensive plantations; the age and growth of which have now the appearance of nature a little improved by art, and display the antiquity of that noble family, and give the whole a most splendid appearance.

As they rode along, Atticus asked Columella, whether he had been to wait on Lord W——, since he came into the country. “Wait on him! not I indeed,” says Columella;

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“ I

" I wait upon no great men ; *Independence* is my motto ! " " So it is mine," says Atticus ; " but surely one may pay a man of fortune or quality common civility, or even take a dinner with him, without being dependant upon him."

" Well, well," says Columella, " as I have nothing to ask, I have nothing to say to any man in power. Some of them have shewn a particular slight to me, by leaving my name out of the commission of the peace, and getting that of a fellow inserted, who is so far from being able to write his name, that I suppose he would be puzzled to make his mark."

" Why," says Hortensius, " I suppose you would not chuse to act as a
Justice

Justice of the Peace, if you *had* been in the commission." "No, that I certainly would not," replies Columella. "So then, you would share the benefits, or at least the honours of society, without discharging the duties of it; you would live in ease and indolence, and yet have the credit of despising those little distinctions, which are the reward of activity and vigilance."

"But indeed, who ever heard of a * poet or a philosopher, much less of an hermit or an anchoret, in the commission of the peace?"

Before Columella could make any

* There is a remarkable exception to this maxim in the western part of Somerset; where the same gentleman does credit to his office as a magistrate, and has taught others to do the same by a most elegant didactic poem on the subject.

reply,

reply, the three travellers were now come into the great road again ; and upon making a short turn at the corner of a wall, Columella (who was not the best of all possible riders) was almost thrown off by the starting of his horse. They had heard a noise at some distance, and now came suddenly into the midst of a scuffle, between the drivers of a post-coach and four, and that of a loaded waggon. The former had insisted upon the countryman's turning out of the road, which as he could not do without manifest danger of overturning his load, he obstinately refused to do ; and being a sturdy fellow, and having custom on his side, he disputed the affair with the two postillions and a valet de chambre

who

who attended the coach, and had defended himself with his cart-whip against them all three, and drubbed them soundly, when the young gentleman in the coach ordered his servant to cock his pistol at him; but seeing Columella and his friends come up, he desired them (with his watch in his hand) to bear witness, that this fellow with his waggon had stopped him upon the road near ten minutes, when he was going upon business of the *utmost importance*; and he would certainly prosecute him with the utmost severity of the law.

The fellow said his busines was of as much *comportance* as the gentleman's; for that the town of Frome would be starved if it was not for

the corn which the farmers wag-gons carried thither. Upon their nearer approach however, Horten-sius and the young gentleman in the coach recollect ed each other, hav-ing met once or twice at a coffee-house in town ; and the latter winking upon Hortensius, told him, that he was come post from the Hot Wells at Bristol that morning, and was only going to eat venison at Lord W—m—th's : he owned therefore that the countryman's busi-ness was of more importance than his; but that the fellow had behaved very insolently, and he thought it was the common interest of every gentleman to check that licentious spirit which was spreading itself thro'

thro' the whole kingdom; where of late, "The toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier, that he galls his kibe." *

Hortensius replied, that it would be difficult to subdue a spirit of freedom in Englishmen, and under our free government; tho' he was sorry, he said, to see it, in the present age, degenerate into so universal a licentiousness.

Atticus and Columella had now interposed, and made peace between the carter and the postillions, by pointing out to them how easily they might compromise the matter, if each of them would give way about ten inches: and the young

* HAMLET.

gentleman,

gentleman, to come off with honour, threw the fellow a shilling to drink ; and thus the affair ended.

As they rode along, Atticus observed, that he himself never had any disputes upon the road ; " and yet," says he, " even when I ride without a servant, I make every one give me the way."

" How do you contrive that ?" says Columella. " Why by a very easy expedient," replies Atticus ; " when I am got within a few yards of the person whom I meet, I give my horse's head a little turn on one side, as if I were going to break way ; and there is a degree of politeness in every man, even in the merest rustic, that the slightest concession

cession or compliment to his self-importance immediately wins upon him, and never fails of success : the man gives me the road, and a bow into the bargain."

Columella in his turn observed, that the most remarkable phænomenon which he had taken notice of these late years, in his retirement, was the surprising improvement in the art of loco-motion, or conveyance from one place to another. "Who would have believed, thirty years ago," says he, "that a young man would come thirty miles in a carriage to dinner, and perhaps return at night? or indeed, who would have said, that coaches would go daily between London and Bath,

in

in about twelve hours ; which, twenty years ago, was reckoned three good days journey ?”

“ Why,” says Atticus, “ it may be reckoned an improvement in the art of travelling ; but I cannot help considering it as a mark of degeneracy, or at least of great luxury in the present age, and very destructive to an useful race of animals ; when, instead of jogging patiently on with a servant and portmanteau, as our fathers did, a young fellow must be conveyed from one scene of dissipation and pleasure to another (or only to eat venison and drink claret) with post-horses, which were formerly appropriated to persons employed in the service of the state ;

state; or to convey dispatches of public utility, or of importance to the community.

C H A P. VI.

COLUMELLA had ordered dinner at three o'clock, but it was near four before they got home. Columella said he had not rode so far these two years, and that he was so much tired he would not stir out of his elbow-chair till he went to bed. In this indolent resolution, however, poor Columella was disappointed; for before they had well dined, man Peter came in very abruptly, and said the church-war-

den

den was come to speak with his master, and had brought Doll Tympany, who had got another big belly, and would not declare the author of her pregnancy, tho' she was within a week of her time; and that Columella, therefore, must go with the church-warden that instant to attend her to the justice.

For the case was, amongst his other *distresses*, some of Columella's neighbours, partly from pique, and partly to ease themselves, had got him nominated by turn to all the parish-offices of constable, church-warden, and overseer; and he was now obliged to act in the latter capacity (however inconsistent with his romantic ideas) and could not well be excused from executing this office,

office, and going that very evening with Doll Tympney three or four miles to the magistrate's house. This to a man of business would have been a trifling hardship ; but to one so long indulged in an habit of indolence, it was a distress sincerely felt, and most pathetically lamented.

C H A P. VII.

THE next day was fixed for Columella and his two friends to dine at Mr. Nonsuch's; which Atticus and Hortensius put him in mind of with great alacrity; as without communicating their sentiments to each other, they found a strong inclina-

tion

tion to improve their acquaintance with the two young ladies, as well as to view the boasted conveniences and embellishments of Mr. Non-such's place. They were a little disconcerted however, and surprised, at finding Columella make some scruple of attending them thither. He said he would send his servant to shew them the way, but that he was so much fatigued with his yesterday's ride, and so much out of order, that he could not enjoy their company if he were to go. His two friends, however, so strongly remonstrated against this extraordinary resolution, and represented the disappointment and affront it would

be to the Nonsuch family, in so striking a light, that he rung the bell, and bade Mrs. Betty look him out some linen, and so forth; for that he should go to Mr. Nonsuch's. “Go to Mr. Nonsuch's!” replies Mrs. Betty; “what with this cold upon you! Well, Sir, you will certainly be laid up again, as you were the last time you went thither: that hall is so cold, and the young ladies talk so much—” “Come, come,” cries Columella, hastily, “I don't ask your advice; make haste and get me a shirt and a clean handkerchief.” Mrs. Betty flung out of the room, and pulled the door after her with a spirit which drew the observation

servation of Atticus and Hortensius, who smiled upon each other, not unobserved by Columella.

As Mr. Non-such's house was not above a mile and a half from Columella's, he and Hortensius determined to walk it, though Atticus chose to ride. The weather had been remarkably fine for some time, but there had been a heavy fog that morning, which just as they got to Mr. Non-such's gate produced a smart shower of rain; and, unfortunately for our beaux, the first specimen they met with of the old gentleman's taste, was a *serpentine* walk which he had made from the court-gate up to the hall-door; so that before the two gentlemen could

twist through the intricacies of this labyrinth, they were almost wet to the skin. When they came however to the last curve of the zig-zag, Hortensius, partly to make more dispatch, and partly perhaps to display his activity to the ladies, who stood surveying them at the parlour-window, leaped over a little hedge of rose-bushes and sweet-briers, and made a direct approach to the hall-door. This insult upon Mr. Nonsuch's chevaux-de-frise, however, was not made with impunity; for a sprig of the sweet-brier had made a considerable rent in one of Hortensius's fine thread stockings. Yet this little accident perhaps laid the first foundation of an event of considerable

considerable consequence in the life of Hortensius; for on his proposing to get the damage repaired by one of Mr. Nonsuch's servants, the old gentleman said that one of his daughters should do it; that they had not been bred up in idleness; and that he should be very angry with them, if they had not their housewife, and its concomitant implements of female industry, always in their pockets.

Whilst her father was speaking, the silent Miss Matilda, by a kind of instinctive motion, had got her needle threaded, and had knitted a knot at the end of her thread; when aunt Sacharissa, with a sour look, said it was more proper for the maid

to do those things. The old gentleman however insisted upon Miss Matilda's proceeding; who immediately began the operation, though not without a delicate blush on her cheeks. Neither could Hortensius feel the touch of so fair a hand without a sensible emotion: nay, as Cupid himself directed the needle, though it hardly touched the surface of the skin, yet it affected the nerves in such a manner, that their vibration was communicated to the very centre of his heart.

C H A P. VIII.

WHILE Miss Matilda was thus engaged with Hortensius, Mr. Nonsuch asked Columella, whether he had heard the melancholy news, that poor Pomfret, the parson of the parish, had lost his wife that morning, of an ulcerated sore-throat? Columella was greatly shocked and surprised at this intelligence; said he knew she was ill, but had not heard of her being in any danger. "Ah!" says Mr. Nonsuch, "the poor little Rector would not take *my advice*. *I told* him, little Doctor, *says I*, it's a very dangerous case, have the best advice at first, *says I*; send for Dr.

Doublefee; the best advice is the cheapest, *says I*; but the Rector would not be ruled: these country apothecaries know nothing at all of the matter." "No! Brother!" says Mrs. Sacharissa; "why, when I was ill t'other day, you said an experienced apothecary was better than all the physicians in England."

"Pooh! pho! you had nothing the matter with you, but mere whims and megrims," says Mr. Nonsuch. "Well then," says Columella, shaking his head, "I am afraid the poor Rector's system of happiness is quite demolished." "Come, come," says Nonsuch, "let us have done with this melancholy subject.

subject. Leonora," continues he, turning to Miss Nonsuch, " give the gentlemen a lesson upon your harpsichord before dinner." Accordingly Miss Leonora entertained them with a concerto and an air, accompanied with a tolerable voice, which seemed to affect Atticus as much as Miss Matilda's readiness to oblige, did his friend Hortensius: so that Columella had nothing to engage him but his melancholy reflections on the sudden death of his good neighbour Mrs. Pomfret, or to ogle aunt Sacharissa, or look at the pictures; the latter of which however seemed the most attractive amusement to Columella.

C H A P. IX.

THE company were now summoned to the dining-parlour; where, by the skill of the experienced Sacharissa, and the good taste of his two daughters, Mr. Nonsuch gave the strangers a very elegant entertainment. The side-board and the table were adorned, somewhat ostentatiously indeed, with a superfluity of plate, both useful and ornamental. Every thing that the wantonness of wealth, or caprice of fashion, could wish for or devise, had been purchased on Mr. Nonsuch's sudden accession of fortune by trading in the stocks; the taste and contrivance of all which

which Mr. Nonsuch did not fail to explain much in his own favour.

When the company had made a few libations to their respective healths, and that of their absent friends ; as the shower which fell before dinner had bedewed the grass, and still hung in drops upon the shrubs, the gentlemen were invited by Madam Sacharissa into the drawing-room ; where they found the quadrille table with its apparatus ready for their reception. As the two strangers, however, were taken in of course for the first pool, the two young ladies had the luck to be cut in of their party ; so that Columella was left to converse with, or rather to listen to, Mr. Nonsuch

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and his sister Sacharissa. For being fatigued, as we said, with his yesterday's ride, as well as low-spirited on the news of Mrs. Pomfret's death, he attended with a sullen taciturnity both to Mrs. Sacharissa's raillery on one side, and to Mr. Nonsuch's good advice on the other. Nonsuch (according to custom) was giving him a lecture upon his indolent and inactive way of life ; that he would destroy his health, and be always hippish and low-spirited, unless he used more constant exercise, or employed himself in some pursuit that would engage his attention, and prevent him from becoming a prey to his own gloomy reflections.

Mrs.

Mrs. Sacharissa said (which she might probably say without danger of contradiction) that she would never marry a man who was not of some profession. To which Mr. Nonsuch echoed back, that he would rather marry his daughter to a man that got four or five hundred pounds a year by his business, than to an idle man of as many thousands, who had nothing to do but to spend what his ancestors had left him. All these wise reflections, Columella (as I observed) listened to with a sullen taciturnity.

Tho' Miss Leonora Nonsuch was confined to the card-table, she could not entirely confine her tongue, nor
keep

keep so tedious a silence; but said several lively things upon the incidents of the game: and having observed, in allusion to the vulgar proverb, that fortune would revenge herself upon Atticus on some future occasion, for the run of luck which he had had at cards; Atticus replied, with a significant look at Miss Leonora, that if fortune would but favour him in *one* instance, the most important to the happiness of his life, he would bid her defiance on all other occasions whatsoever.

Miss Matilda also, tho' she made but little use of her tongue, yet she and Hortensius carried on a no less intelligible conversation by the language

guage of the eyes ; tho' Hortensius now and then, out of mere politeness, said civil things to Aunt Sacharissa (who was over-looking the card-table) which she did not fail to interpret in a sense the most favourable to her own wishes. When the pool was ended, Miss Leonora looked round, and seeing Columella left alone, and still wrapt up in a gloomy reverie, "Mr. Milward," says she, "pray favour us with the result of your profound meditations." Columella blushed, and starting up, began talking to Mrs. Sacharissa's parrot. "Well," says Mrs. Sacharissa, "I find Poll will make you talk, tho' I could not : I hope you will improve by her conversation.

tion. Hortensius said, she put him in mind of what he saw at an inn, when the Hessians were quartered at Winchester.—A Dutchman was got talking to a magpie that hung up in a cage at the door, and seeing a gentleman laugh at him from the parlour-window, Mynheer, expressing himself with some difficulty, said, “ He taach me de English langige :” so I hope Poll will teach my friend Columella some of the polite language of her mistress Sacharissa.

Mr. Nonsuch and his sister being taken in of course for the next pool, Miss Leonora and Atticus chose to sit out ; and (Columella being still in the dumps) they had

a *tête-à-tête*, much to their mutual satisfaction.

C H A P. X.

IT being now tea-time, when that important affair was dispatched, the evening being fine, the company issued forth with great expectation, to see Mr. Nonsuch's rural embellishments; of which, though he had himself spoken modestly enough, yet he was not a little conceited.

As the situation was in the village, they were necessarily confined within a wall of less than an acre in circumference: within this compass however they had contrived to introduce

duce every individual article of modern taste. There was a large shrubbery, a small serpentine river, over which was thrown a Chinese bridge of a considerable diameter ; there was a Chinese pagod, a Gothic temple, a grotto, a root-house or hermitage, a Cynic tub or two by the water-side ; at one corner of the garden was a summer-house with a gilded ball, which Mr. Nonsuch boasted to be seen twenty miles round, and at the opposite corner was a barn-end converted into a Gothic spire, which he would impose upon strangers for the parish church, though the real church-tower, which peeped over the wall, discovered the deception, and constantly

stantly gave him the lie. With like success, on a little bank which appeared over another part of the wall he had erected a sham wind-mill; though from a little mount at the end of the terrace, a water-mill shewed the inutility, and of consequence the improbability of a wind-mill in that situation. In short, though Mr. Nonsuch had contrived to introduce into and round his pleasure-ground every object which the most fruitful imagination under the influence of fashion could devise, yet Hortensius might well whisper to Columella, and say,

“ —*Intra muros peccatur, et extra.*”

“ —What strange absurdities abound,

“ Within, without the walls, and all around !”

MAHO.

Columella,

Columella, though not in a festive mood, accompanied Mr. Nonsuch and his friends round his little territory with a sort of satirical smile, arising from a conscious sense of the superiority of his own taste.

Atticus and Hortensius, though they could not really applaud the *tout ensemble*, or the motley whole, yet politely complimented him on the execution of each particular edifice ; and especially the young ladies, on the good fancy they had shewn in disposing their shells, and adorning the grotto.

C H A P. XI.

AFTER having sufficiently admired Mr. Nonsuch's taste, and expressed their sense of the felicity he must enjoy with his amiable daughters, in so agreeable a sequestration from the noise and bustle of the world; the three friends took their leave, not without a pressing invitation from the old gentleman to repeat their visit, and drink a dish of tea with his sister and daughters as often as they found it agreeable to them. "Yes," says Mrs. Sacharissa, aside to Hortenfius, "the oftener the better; I fancy you must have

have but a dull time of it with Mr. Milward and his *maid*."

As Hortensius and Columella walked home together, Hortensius asked his friend what made him so dull and out of spirits to-day. He was afraid, he said, that something lay upon his mind, as he had observed him frequently in the same gloomy fits since they had been in the country. Columella replied, that although he was a good deal shocked at Mrs. Pomfret's sudden death, that was not the sole cause of his melancholy appearance; but that a confused mass of gloomy ideas, which he could not unravel, often hung upon his spirits, and made him almost tired of his existence.

"Why,"

“ Why,” says Hortensius, “ I have sometimes experienced that perplexed state of mind, and felt for a moment that oppressive load of spleen, which you complain of; but I always drag the lurking fiend into open day-light, and bring him to the test of reason, and generally find it to be a mere phantom of the imagination, that immediately vanishes into air.

“ Thus, perhaps, I have received an unmerited slight from a person whose favour I have been ambitious to obtain; if I am conscious I have done nothing to deserve it, I treat it with the contempt which pride or insolence deserves. Perhaps I am to wait on some great man about

some disagreeable affair, where my reception is dubious, and I anticipate in fancy the shock of a disappointment; but then I consider that a few hours will determine my fate, and prepare myself for the event.

“ In short, if I find the imagined evil capable of redress, I think of the best means to effect it; if without remedy, I summon all the powers of reason and religion to bear it with Christian patience, or philosophical fortitude; and this very exertion of the mental faculties soon dissipates every cloud of melancholy and despair.”

“ But,” continues Hortensius, “ your malady is evidently owing to

to your living too much at home, and to the want of some pursuit to rouse the animal spirits and prevent their stagnation."

" Ah! no;" replies Columella, " it may be from long habit; but I am never truly happy unless at home, where I can be entirely free and easy, and under no kind of restraint; there I am

" Lord of myself, accountable to none,
" But to my conscience — and to Heav'n
alone."

" And to your maid alone, you should have said," replies Hortensius, smiling. " To my maid!" says Columella in some confusion, " what do you mean?" " Come, come," says Hortensius, patting his friend on the shoulder, " *Ne sit ancillæ tibi amor pudori.*"

pudori; “Why cannot you talk without reserve to your old friends?” To be free with you, I am sure there is something of that kind which makes you uneasy; some secret grievance which preys upon your spirits, and makes you continually hinting at the vanity and vexations of human life: and it might afford you considerable relief to unburthen your mind to those, who you are convinced would make no wrong use of your confidence.

“ Atticus and I have both agreed, that no servant would take the freedom which your house-keeper does with you, my friend, if you had not taken some freedoms with her. It is one ill effect of solitude or privacy, that it encourages a disregard

to character, and often makes us do those things in a private situation, from which the fear of public censure would probably deter us.

“ Yet don’t imagine, my dear Columella, that I am going to assume the office of a rigid monitor: I know my own frailty too well; and only wish to be acquainted with the present state of your intercourse (if any such there be) that you may manage matters to the best advantage, and extricate yourself, if possible, from any perplexity in which perhaps some indiscretion may have involved you.”

Columella, who had been all this while in a profound reverie, after some hesitation was going to reply, when they were now got to the

great road, and just at that instant were overtaken by Atticus on horseback, who dismounting, gave his steed to the servant, and accompanied his friends on foot.

When they were alone, “ Well,” says Atticus, “ I think we have spent a very agreeable day: the ladies are very conversible animals; and I look upon the old ’squire as one of the happiest of mortals.”

“ Yes,” says Columella, “ he’s one of the *οἱ πολλοί*, one of the unthinking multitude, who jog on in the beaten track of life, and take things upon trust, just as they find them: but to be sure, in point of taste, old Nonsuch is quite enveloped in Gothic ignorance.

“ Why, faith,” replies Hortensius,
“ I think

" I think that is the best *taste*, and the best system of philosophy, which makes a man happy and satisfied with himself, and is adapted to the present state of things. To what purpose do we cultivate an exquisite taste and delicacy of sentiment, that only serves to make us miserable? For my part, I am for making the best of a bad market, and enjoying this *stupid* world as I find it; whether it be the best of all possible systems or not."

" Well," says Columella, " but who can hear with patience a man talk of the pleasures of retirement, and a rural life, whose whole happiness is in visiting and cards; or in smoking his pipe upon his terrace, which overlooks a public road,

78 COLUMELLA; or,

and gaping about for every wagon or dung-cart that passes by, merely to supply the place of reflection?"

" Well, well," says Hortensius, " every one to his mind," as the man said, when he kissed his cow. You are sensible, my friend, we must all have our *amusements* of one kind or other; and perhaps the cheapest are the best."

He then told Atticus what had been the subject of their conversation; and repeated his request to Columella, that he would unbosom himself to his old friends, whose lenient counsel might probably be of considerable service to him; as nothing could lessen the weight of any affliction so much, as the communicating

municating it to some faithful and affectionate friend.

Columella, after deliberating the matter with himself, smiling, said, that it was in vain to conceal from them what he was convinced people of their penetration must already have discovered. He confessed, that he had formed a very imprudent and improper connection with the person whom they hinted at; but at the same time he must tell them, that things were in such a situation as to render their advice of no service to him; for that he could neither retreat nor proceed.

"How so!" cries Atticus; "you must either be absolutely engaged to marry her, or not engaged. If you are actually engaged to her,

tho' I should be very sorry for it, yet for Heaven's sake fulfil your engagements; if you are not absolutely engaged, for your own sake break off the connection immediately."

"Why, in short," replies Columella, "I have actually given her a contract of marriage; and yet I would not marry her for the Indies."

"How so?" says Atticus; "what, upon account of her family perhaps, or her low-life connections?" "No, I don't regard that," says Columella. "Perhaps," says Hortensius, "you suspect she has granted others, the same favours which she has granted you?" "No, God forbid!" replies Columella; "I am confident of her fidelity." "Is it her temper

you

you are afraid of?" "No; she is very good-tempered." "Is it her intellectual capacity that you object to?" "No; she has very good sense."

"In short, continues Columella; "it is her cursed, vulgar, unclassical language, that disgusts me to the last degree. I shall never be able to make her talk English, grammatically at least. She tortures my ears every hour in the day with her solecisms, her rustic dialect, or her uncouth expressions. No Thestylis or Amaryllis of antiquity, with all the Doric rusticity of Theocritus, nor modern Blowzelind, with the studied barbarisms of Gay or Ambrose Phillips, was ever so vile a corruptor of human speech, as my dear Dulcinea del Toboso."

“ Come, come,” says Atticus, “ this is mere fun and humour ; but there is more danger of such a mother’s instilling vulgar notions into your children, than her merely teaching them a vulgar dialect and ungrammatical language ; and a worse circumstance attending such a connection is, that she will spy out all your foibles and imperfections, tho’ she will not be a judge of your literary merit, nor the delicacy of sentiment upon which you so much pique yourself. However, tho’ I would caution any friend, and every young person, against such imprudent attachments ; yet, when they have proceeded to a certain point, I would have them fulfil them, as I said before : for I have generally observed

more

more ill effects from violating than from pursuing such engagements. The affections, when forcibly wrench-ed off from their first attachment, seldom unite kindly with any other object."

Before Columella had time to make any reply, they were surprised at the sight of a post-chaise, which came out of the gate that led to Columella's house, attended by a servant out of livery. There was in it an handsome middle-aged wo-man, and a young lady about six-teen. On a lozenge on the door of the chaise were quartered the arms of England within a bordure, argent and azure. The gentlemen made a low bow to the ladies; and tho' they had only a transient view

of the arms, Atticus judged it to be
the Duchess Dowager of Beaufort.

When they came to the wood
which leads to Columella's house,
they saw his man Peter, who had
been to open the gate for them, and
stayed to put up a rail, which some-
body had wantonly broken down.
Columella immediately enquired of
Peter who the ladies were, and whe-
ther they had left any message?
"No, Sir," says Peter; they have
only been to see our place. It is a
taylor's wife and daughter from
Bath, as their 'prentice who at-
tended them told me. They have
hired a chaise to carry them to Wey-
mouth, on a jaunt of pleasure; and
my landlord at the George told them
our place was worth seeing."

On

On hearing this, Atticus was greatly scandalized at the modern prostitution of those ensigns of honour, which every inn-keeper blazons upon his hackney vehicle that he lets out at nine pence a mile.

"No one," says Atticus, "has a greater contempt for family pride, unsupported by personal merit, than I have; as the splendor of his ancestors undoubtedly sets a worthless peer in the most contemptible light. Yet I cannot but look upon the families of our ancient nobility, our Howard's and our Seymour's, our Percy's and our Talbot's (occasionally illustrated from time to time, by statesmen or heroes, by learned or valiant individuals) I cannot but behold them, I say, with a veneration

ration similar to that with which I view an ancient castle, or Gothic cathedral, adorned with trophies and monuments of different ages from the remotest period of our history.

"For which reason, as I am rather disagreeably affected whenever I meet with those names to which I have affixed such venerable ideas, polluted, as it were, by plebeians of the meaner trades and occupations (such as * barbers, taylors, and † chimney-sweepers); so I cannot but be much more disgusted to see those antique ensigns of honour (which have been granted from the crown as the reward of some great achievement in arms or arts) so vilely

* Wentworth, a barber at Oxford. † Pierpoint, a chimney-sweeper at Newark, &c.

prostituted

prostituted as they now are: and I am angry with the Heralds-Office for not interfering, and putting a stop to our hackney-coach-men from bearing coronets and supporters on their twelve-penny conveyances, as they constantly have done for some years.”

“ Why,” says Hortensius, “ if the Heralds-Office or court of chivalry have any judicial power at all left, they certainly have a right to redress usurpations in matters of coat-armour; but their not having any coercive power, their jurisdiction is so far restrained by superior courts, that it is fallen into disuse and contempt *.

“ Well,” says Atticus, “ what-

* See Blackstone’s Comment. Vol. iii. p. 105.
ever

ever their power at present may be, as it has been the policy of all wise states to establish some cheap rewards for merit of every kind, I cannot but wish that some authority were restored to those courts, or something better established in this kingdom.

"I am sensible that too great a regard to the pride of families must be detrimental to a commercial state, as ours is ; but I would have *merit of every kind* entitled to these honourable distinctions : so that a man who had raised a fortune by his honest industry in any *trade*, even of the mechanic kind ; or that had distinguished himself by his literary *merit*, at the bar, in the pulpit, or by the practice of physic, or any other

other learned profession, as well as in the army or the navy, should be entitled to an exclusive right, either to assume any armorial device of his own, or some honourable addition to those which his family already enjoyed."

Hortensius being tired with this harangue, was going to resume the subject of Columella's amour, in which they had been interrupted; but they were now unaware, got to the amphitheatre before the house, which put an end to their conversation.

C H A P. XII.

AS soon as they entered the hall, Mrs. Betty came somewhat officially to her master ; and said, she was *sorry* they had stayed so *late*, as there had been *company* to see the place. “ But,” says she, “ those young ladies at Nonsuch - house would never part with the gentlemen, by their own good will.” “ Company!” says Columella; “ what *company* have you had?” “ Why,” says Hortensius, “ the *company* of Merchant Taylors is no despicable company, I assure you.” “ Oh !” replies Mrs. Betty (who had not heard Peter’s intelligence) “ I am sure they were

were people of *extinction* by their *motions*." "Well, Mrs. Betty," says Hortensius; "and how did the ladies like your master's place?" "O! *perdigiously*," says Mrs. Betty; "they said it was so rural, and so Gothic! Miss was quite in *exotics*, and repeated plays, and poetry—and the lady said she could sit in that grotto and *sympathize* by the hour. I assure you, Sir, the lady was very much of a gentlewoman, and invited me to come and see her at Bath."

"Well, well," says Columella; "I don't want to hear any more of them or their remarks." Mrs. Betty retired; and Columella threw himself into an elbow chair, and never spoke a word till supper time.

When the cloth was removed,

and

and the three friends were alone again, Hortensius would have resumed the subject of Columella's ignoble passion ; but Atticus seeing him already in such low spirits, very prudently said, they would reserve it to another opportunity. Columella was quite silent, but pushed about the bottle with great alacrity : and after they had drank a glass or two round, the gloom which hung upon Columella's brow was entirely dispelled ; and finding himself rather more easy now he had broken the affair to his friends, he began to be very cheerful company.

" Well," says Hortensius, in a jocose strain, " I hope our friend Columella will not hang or drown himself this time ; tho' I am sorry

to

to find him so frequently subject to these fits of the spleen."

" Why," says Atticus, " few minds, I believe, can bear such an absolute solitude, however agreeable it may appear in idea, or in poetical description; and as people in these gloomy fits find some temporary relief from the bottle, there is great danger, lest, for want of other amusement, they should contract an habitual indulgence of this kind; tho' I hope our friend here has too good a taste for the enjoyment of life to be content with so wretched an expedient."

" Well," says Hortensius, " I am glad however to find Columella upon any terms restored to his usual chearfulness; though he puts me in mind

mind of what happened lately to a very honest gentleman of my acquaintance in London, who having lived pretty freely, and spent a good part of his fortune, was now become low-spirited, and *sick of the world*; after providing himself therefore with a pistol, or some other proper instrument for his purpose, he goes to a tavern, and writes the following laconic epistle to a very intimate friend:

“ Sick of the trifling enjoyments,
“ and oppressed with the many evils
“ of life, I see nothing further in
“ this world in the least desirable,
“ and many things which disgust
“ me and raise my indignation, and
“ make life an intolerable burthen;
“ I am

“ I am therefore come to a resolution to bear it no longer.

“ Farewell, my dear friend; may you live happier than I have done!
“ I write this from the _____
“ tavern; but before you receive it
“ —*I am no more.*”

“ Having finished his letter he rang the bell for the waiter, and bade him send a porter with it as directed. The waiter was going, when the gentleman thinking he looked a little queer upon him for not calling for something to drink, to prevent suspicion he bade him, as soon as he had dispatched the messenger, bring him a bottle of Port.

“ The drawer soon executed each part of his command, and pouring out

out a glass of wine, the gentleman drank it off, and finding it relish, and give him an unexpected flow of spirits, as soon as the waiter was gone he took another glass; and in short, after two or three glasses of wine, he found the gloom which had oppressed him entirely dispersed, and his sentiments of life so much altered, that when his friend arrived, (who on the receipt of his letter had hurried away in the utmost consternation) he found the desperate suicide quite elevated with the gifts of Bacchus, laughing at his own folly, and determined not to quit his station in this world without the leave of his commanding officer; so they sat down together, and concluded the evening with as much jollity

jollity and satisfaction as I hope we shall do."

Columella smiled, and pouring out another glass, "Come then," says he,

"*Adsit lætitiae Bacchus dator & bona Juno.*"

"Be Bacchus, god of mirth, our guest,

"And Juno grace the genial feast!"

"No," replies Atticus, "Juno was a scold; let Juno therefore look after her household affairs, and we'll drink Miss Leonora and Miss Matilda Nonsuch."

"With all my heart," says Hortensius, "but let us join our friend's fair Hebe with our own toasts. Come, Columella——

"A slave could stern Achilles move,

"And bend his haughty soul to love."

In short, Columella plied his friends so closely, and seemed to take his glass so much more freely than he had formerly done at college, (where he was reckoned a mere milk-sop) that they began to suspect, that for want of other amusement in his solitude, he was become as zealous a votary of Bacchus as of Apollo and the Muses.

C H A P. XIII.

WHEN the triumvirate met at breakfast the next morning, Columella said he was tired with gadding about, and was determined to spend that day at least with his friends at home, and would not be interrupted with any more impertinent visitors, nor sacrifice the sacred rights of friendship to insipid forms and tedious unmeaning ceremony.

"Well then," says Atticus, "as the morning mists foretell a very hot day, we'll go and shelter ourselves amongst the Hamadryads, under the shade of your groves, in the deepest recess of Arno's vale, and

100 COLUMELLA; or,

enjoy your cascade, or read and chat
as we find ourselves disposed."

Hortensius said, without Miss Matilda and Leonora, as well as the Hamadryads, to enliven the conversation, such a scene would be as insipid to him as the most formal visit to his aunt or his grandmother. "I like your Arcadia's and your Tempe's, as well as any of you," continues he; "but I always include kind nymphs and beautiful shepherdesses, as well as verdant groves, flowery meads, and frisking lambkins, in my idea of pastoral life."

"That is," replies Atticus, "you love rural retreats and *solitude*, like other fine folks, with two or three card-tables, and gossiping company."

"Well, then," says Columella,
"Hortensius shall have Lady Wort-
ley Montague's Town Eclogues, or
the New Atalantis, for his com-
panions in Arno's vale."

"No," replies Hortensius, (tak-
ing up a volume of Burnet's History
of his own Time, which he had
been reading) "I'll take this book,
which abounds with as much scan-
dal, and as many gossiping stories,
as any female novelist, or memoir-
writer in England or France."

When they were now setting out
upon their walk, however, they were
interrupted in the execution of their
romantic project, by man Peter's
coming into the room; who, scratch-
ing his head (according to custom
when any thing distressed him) told

his master, that farmer Shrewd, his tenant, was come, and said Columella must go immediately, and look at the roof of his barn, which, by the principal beam's being cracked, was in immediate danger of falling in; and that the farmer could not safely bring in his corn till the carpenter had repaired it. "Zounds!" says Columella, "the farmer and his barn may go to the devil's-arse-a-peak for me! Tell him I am busy, and would not leave my friends if all the barns in the kingdom were to tumble in."

"Yes, so I told him," quoth Peter; "I told him you were so busy a discoursing with your old school-fellows, and walking up and down with them, and shewing 'em the cascades, and the grottos, and such like,

like, that we had hardly time to eat our victuals, and that we could not stir from home if all the barns and stables and out-houses in the country were tumbling down."

" Well, well, go along," says Columella, " and tell him I cannot come; and I'll not be at home to any body."

Columella had not done speaking, when Mrs. Betty came running to the parlour-door, with a look of trepidation, and said, there were two gentlemen in mourning at the gate, and a servant with a French-horn; and she believed one of them was young Mr. Whiskey. " Pox take the fellow!" says Columella, " tell him I am not home; we shall be plagued with all the fools in the

country at this rate. This puppy," continues he, "is just come to an estate of about seven or eight hundred a year, and though his father has not been dead above a month, rides about the country with a French-horn, and some idle fellow or other for his companion, who encourages him in his folly before his face, and laughs at him behind his back.

" You must know too, he pretends a great fondness for poetry, and is always pulling out his pocket-book stuffed with insipid copies of verses. He was entered at Furnival's Inn to finish his education; and, in short, is the very counterpart of Dapper, the lawyer's clerk, in Ben Johnson's *Alchymist*,

" —That's

—“That’s heir to forty marks a year,
“Consorts with the small poets of the time,
“Is the sole hope of his old grandmother.”

Columella had hardly finished his character, when the young gentleman unexpectedly made his appearance; as Peter had not the courage to deny his master’s being at home, when he was that moment come from him.

Young Whiskey begged leave to introduce parson Triplet, the new curate of his parish, to Columella; and desired to shew him his beautiful place. At the same time, taking Columella a little aside, he told him in a whisper, that Triplet was the greatest genius for poetry this day in England, and would write verses as fast as a horse could gallop.

"Oh!" says Columella, loud enough to be heard, "I hate verses, tho' I love poetry: but my servant shall wait on you down to the cascade, as I am engaged with my friends here, and I am sorry I cannot attend you."

Young Whiskey then said, he had brought his French horn, and would place it in the Sybil's temple, which would produce a very good effect. "I design to have another French horn," continues he, "as soon as I can meet with a servant that can blow."

"Why," says Hortensius, "I think the young gentleman is quite in the right. *One* horn is but an odd thing, to be sure: a cow with one horn, is as bad as a cat with one ear."

car." " Faith! a good thing, Triplet.—Well doctor," continues he, " do go and bid my servant put up the horses (by Mr. Milward's leave) and follow us with his French horn into the walks."

As soon as Triplet was gone out of the room, young Whiskey pulled out his pocket-book, and said he would shew them an excellent copy of verses which the Curate wrote, off hand, one morning at breakfast. " It is upon Caprice," says he; " and was a subject given out by a poetical society near Bath; and would certainly have gained the prize, if it had not been thought proper to pay a compliment to two Duchesses

F 6 and

and a dignified Clergyman *, who were candidates for the myrtle that morning. But, for Heaven's sake ! don't give Mr. Triplet the least hint that I shewed you his verses ; for he is a very *modest* man ; and would never forgive me, if he knew that I betrayed him." On Whiskey's offering Hortensius the verses, he took them, and, with an arch leer, read as follows :

* Parson Triplet had a more formidable rival for the myrtle however ; as I believe the incomparable author of the New Bath Guide was a candidate that morning.

ON CAPRICE.

OFFSPRING of Pride and lawless
Pow'r,

Whom Folly, in an evil hour,
The gifts of Fortune to defeat,
Brought forth, the torment of the great :
Caprice ! go vent thy little rage
On vice, deformity, or age !
There tyrannize with boundless sway ;
Nor youth and beauty make thy prey.

With those bright eyes, that blooming face,
That shape, and air, and winning grace ;
With all that wit and taste impart,
To hold in captive chains the heart ;
Yet, Laura, with what fatal haste
Your fleeting moments run to waste !
Your spring of life, alas ! is o'er ;
That joyous age that comes no more !
You captives make ; yet not a swain
But soon, disgusted, breaks his chain.

Caprice

110 COLUMELLA; or,

Caprice those brilliant eyes disarms ;
An antidote to all your charms !
Fraught with the pow'r to save or kill,
You lovers gain, to treat them ill.
To-day you smile, to-morrow frown ;
You raise our hopes, then spurn them down :
Now spread, and now contract your sail,
As Fancy and Caprice prevail.
Would any wretch embark for life
With such a fair, fantastic wife ?

No ; rather let me stem the tide,
Without an helm my bark to guide,
The sport of waves and varying winds ;
Than trust to such capricious minds,
Where whim and passion hold the rein,
And slighted reason pleads in vain.

Tho' fortune on our prospects smiles,
Caprice our fairest hopes beguiles.
Tho' blest with friends, with youth and health,
And all the gay parade of wealth,
With equipage, a mansion fair,
With turrets glittering high in air,
Our lawns extend ; our waving woods
Inverted nod from silver floods ;

With

The Distressed Anchoret. - III

With every earthly means of bliss,
Our road to happiness we miss.
Capricious fancy's dazzling light
Misleads us like a dancing sprite;
Thro' woods and wilds we vagrant roam,
And never reach our destin'd home.

Nature decks out a various feast,
To humour each fastidious guest;
But Fancy, like a wayward child,
By too indulgent parents spoil'd,
Indignant kens the offer'd treat;
Tho' urg'd by hunger, scorns to eat:
Turns from Mamma with angry eye,
And frets and pouts, it knows not why.

“ There !” says Hortensius to Columella, when he had done reading, “ there’s a wife for you men of taste; tho’ probably the poet had no intention to satyrize any of his neighbours, and only meant to shew his talent at description.” Atticus observed, that writing madrigals was a pretty

a pretty apostolical recreation for a young divine: "but perhaps," added he, "it may keep the young man from smoking and drinking, and from low company; which, for want of other amusements, our younger clergy in the country are too apt to indulge themselves in. "Ah! no," says Whiskey, "that is the worst of it; Triplet is very clever, to be sure; but he is too fond of low company, and will smoke you a dozen pipes at a sitting; and then the dog will drink like a fish: but it's only to oblige his company, for Tom's a very good-natured, honest fellow."

"Well," says Columella; "as he is *your friend*, we don't want to hear any more either of his foibles or his virtues."

"But,

"But, mum ! here he is," says Whiskey ; "for God's sake don't let him know that I shewed his verses, for he communicated them to me in confidence ; but I could not forbear taking a copy of them.

On Triplet's informing his friend Whiskey, that the servant had put up the horses and was ready to attend them with his French horn ; Columella asked them if they chose to drink any thing : which they refusing, he wished them a good walk ; and much to his satisfaction, got rid of the young cub and his extempore bard.

C H A P. XIV.

WHEN the two young people were gone, Atticus could not forbear reflecting on the imprudence of the younger clergy, in thus casting off that dignity of character which alone can secure them a lasting respect, and exposing themselves to the ridicule, and perhaps the censure of those very people, to whom they condescend to such improper compliances.

" Well," says Columella, " this now is the right worshipful society which our little Rector, Peter of Pomfret, would have me take in exchange for the conversation of

Cicero.

Cicero, Virgil, Seneca, or * Pliny the consul."

As it was now too late for the three friends to take their morning's ramble (at least without joining Whiskey and his friend Triplet) they agreed to defer it till the evening, and taking each of them a book, threw themselves upon the settee or elbow-chairs, and read for an hour in profound taciturnity.

Whilst they were thus employed, they overheard part of a dialogue between Atticus's servant and Columella's man Peter, in a sort of butler's pantry near the parlour. "Why don't you begin laying the cloth,

* Whose Epistles my female readers are probably acquainted with, from Mr. Melmoth's elegant translation.

Mr.

Mr. Peter?" says the former. "No, no," says Peter, "dinner won't be ready this hour; and then master will be scolding at me and the cook till it comes upon table; for as soon as ever master sees the knives and forks laid, *he longs to be at it*," quoth Peter.

Hortensius smiled upon Atticus, and Columella got up and shut the parlour-door.

From this remark of Peter's however, the two friends inferred, either that Columella's refined taste for the beauties of nature had not entirely extinguished his taste for beef and mutton; or that his domestic amusements were not sufficient to fill up the vacuity of his mind; or rather, that Peter judged of his master's

master's inclinations from his own gross ideas, and what he himself felt upon those occasions.

But Columella himself was ingenuous enough to acknowledge, that he had of late given his man Peter but too much reason for his reflection. "For," says he, "though I do not find quite so much pleasure in gratifying my appetite, as Peter takes it for granted I do; yet, since my place has lost the force of novelty, and reading and other amusements are become indifferent, or rather insipid to me, I own that I find my time hang heavy upon my hands, and feel a consequent lassitude, or *ennui* as the French call it; and expect with impatience the stated returns of the ordinary func-

ctions

tions of life; and many a day do nothing but count the hours from breakfast to dinner-time, and from dinner to supper; not for the pleasure I take in eating or drinking (for I have no appetite) but merely for some little variety which those periods produce."

" Well," says Atticus, " and this seems to be the case with many people who abound in leisure, as well as money, and don't know how to employ either: and there is but one remedy for this disgust, which is, to have always some laudable pursuit, and to distinguish each hour of the day by some useful, or at least some rational employment; and then, instead of complaining of the tediousness of life, you would

think

think the day too short, and not interrupt and hurry your domestics by your restlessness and impatience."

"As for Peter's impudence," says Columella, "he's a poor half-witted animal, and I bear with his non-sense and stupidity, rather than subject myself to the prying eyes of a more sensible fellow; because he will do any thing that I employ him about, and I myself can say or do whatever I please before Peter, with as much indifference as I would before a cat or a dog, or a joint-stool. I hate a servant that has more sense than his master."

They now resumed their meditations for half an hour longer; when finding themselves tired with reading, they were going, by unanimous consent,

consent, to take a turn upon the lawn, when they again overheard Peter talking to a man at the door.

The man said, he heard that the 'squire wanted an hermit. "An hermit!" says Peter, not caring to confess his ignorance, "where is he?" "Where? under my coat," says the man. "But where was he caught?" quoth Peter; "is he good to eat? or is it only a curiosity?"

Columella and his friends were now come to the door; where they beheld a very venerable figure, with a long white beard, a bald head, and dressed in a long brown coat almost down to his ancles: he had two sticks nailed across in his hand, by way of crucifix, and a string of issue-peas for a rosary of beads.

The

The man repeated his errand to Columella, that he heard his honour wanted an hermit to live in his woods, and said he should be very proud to serve him.

Columella asked him whence he came? he said, he had lived four years in that capacity, with the late Sir Humphry Whimwham. But that when Sir Humphry died, his son had insisted upon his doing a great deal more work than he had agreed for with Sir Humphry; which was only to keep his hermitage clean, and to sit at the door with a book in his hand when any company came, and such like: but young Sir Humphry expected him to weed in the garden, to feed the poultry,

and to do a great deal more *hard* work, and yet had diminished his wages." "What wages had you then?" says Columella. "Why, Sir Humphry gave me twenty pounds a year, meat, drink, washing and lodging; but rather than be out of *business* and live *idle*, I would serve your honour for something less."

While Columella was discoursing with the hermit, Whiskey and his friend Triplet returned from their walk, and overhearing what passed, Whiskey winked upon Columella, and pulling him aside, told him, that the hermit was a sad drunken dog, and was turned away for getting the dairy-maid with child. He added,

that

that altho' Sir Humphry had made a bargain with him to be always sitting upon a stone by the door with a book in his hand, when any company came, yet he more than once caught him with a pipe and a jug of ale, instead of his book and his beads; and that his son, as soon as Sir Humphry died, had turned the hermitage into a dog-kennel.

Columella then told the old man, that he was an hermit himself, and lived in his own woods; and ordering him some drink, dismissed him.

" Well," says Hortensius, " this is a new species of luxury and expence which you men of taste are got into; though perhaps keeping an hermit may be cheaper than keep-

ing a wh-re, or even than a pack of dogs; as I suppose young Sir Humphry would have found it."

Young Whiskey and his friend now took their leave, without any invitation to dinner from Columella, whose present misanthropy, rather than his want of generosity, prevented his paying them that compliment.

C H A P. XV.

IN the afternoon, as soon as the three gentlemen had drank their coffee, they sallied gently forth to enjoy the cool of the evening in Arno's vale; though Atticus was become thoughtful, and Hortensius said, he found a stronger propensity to walk towards Nonsuch-house, than into those gloomy haunts of the Nymphs and Hamadryads. When they came down to the cascade however, they were agreeably surprised at the unexpected sight of the two Miss Nonsuch's, who appeared thro' the trees, seated upon the forest-seat. As they approached them, Hortensius

threw himself into a theatrical attitude of admiration, and addressed the young nymphs in Miltonics :

“ Fairest than feign'd of old, or fabled since,
Or of fairy damsels met in forest wild
“ By errant knights.”

Milton's Paradise Regained.

To which the romantic Miss Nonsuch made a short reply in the same poetical style. But Hortensius's gaiety of spirit received a sudden check by the appearance of a smart young man, playing with a dog, from behind an old oak, who had attended the young ladies in their walk: And taking him for some gallant, as the youth, like David, was “ ruddy, and of a fair countenance.”

nance ; so Hortensius, like Goliah, could not forbear “ cursing him by his gods.” Atticus too, thinking him to be some senior Soph, who was come from the University to spend his vacation in the country, assumed the dignity of an head of a house, and in a droll whisper, asked Columella whose son the stripling was. Columella however was not in a jesting humour, but said he believed it was only an haberdasher’s apprentice, a nephew of Mr. Non-such, whom he had bred up, and whom they expected to spend a part of the autumn in the country. This account dispersed the clouds of jealousy which began to spread themselves over the features of Horten-

fius and Atticus, even at the mere shadow of a rival in the Miss Non-such's favour.

Columella's two friends had now an opportunity, which each of them secretly wished for, of talking freely and alone with the two Miss Non-such's. Accordingly Atticus engaged the sprightly Miss Leonora, and Hortensius the silent Miss Matilda, in a separate conversation; and they were happy to find that the two sisters could occasionally change sides, and each of them support the opposite character: for as Miss Leonora could converse agreeably on serious topics, so the grave Miss Matilda could behave with the sprightliness and gaiety of her sister.

As

As to Columella, he was left to entertain the young cockney, and to listen to his judicious remarks on the beauties or defects of his place. The young man admired the cascade, but proposed laying it a little more open, by cutting away a branch or two of some old trees, and planting some flowering shrubs, and enlivening the rough basin with a Chinese rail, and the like; having no idea that its chief beauty depended upon the native wildness of the scene which surrounded it.

He then asked Columella, whether he had ever seen the cascade at Vauxhall. "Yes, part of it," replies Columella. "What! it was so crowded I suppose, that you

could not get near enough to see the whole." "No," says Columella, "I only saw part of it at the tin-man's shop, before it was put up."

"Why," says the cockney, smiling, "I have heard indeed, that it is not real water that turns the mill there.

"But," adds he, "I wish you could see my master's country-house near Hammersmith, I am sure you would like it." "That's not quite so certain," answered Columella, gruffly. "Oh!" says the young man, "but we have there a cascade with real water, and though it is only supplied from our cistern, it will play half an hour together; and it is admired by every body: it is adorned

adorned with shells and bits of looking-glass; and a circle of flower-pots set all round it. I am sure, Sir, you would like it."

In short, the Hammersmith cascade had taken so entire possession of the young cit's imagination, that he seemed to have no relish for the native beauties of Columella's.

C H A P. XVI.

WHILST Columella's morose misanthropic temper was doing penance with the haberdasher, Hortensius and Atticus spent their time more agreeably with the young ladies; and by making the best use of this

G 6 opportunity

opportunity made no inconsiderable progress in gaining their affections. As both Miss Nonsuch and Miss Matilda had observed from their father's civility to the two strangers, that he viewed them in a respectable light, they thought it no breach of the duty they owed him, to listen with some degree of pleasure to the professions which Atticus and Hortensius severally made them. As the evening however was now pretty far advanced, they thought it prudent to take their leave, and move homewards : but before they parted, as the two gentlemen had begged leave to wait on them at tea the following day, Miss Matilda, supported by her sister, gave them a

strict

strict charge not to drop an hint to their aunt Sacharissa of their having accidentally met in Columella's woods.

C H A P. XVII.

TO understand the true reason of the young ladies caution on this head, the reader must be informed of what passed in the Nonsuch family after the first and second interview with Columella and his two friends.

When they got home to Nonsuch-house, after their first visit to Columella, as Hortensius had made Mrs. Sacharissa Nonsuch a gallant speech

or

or two, she parted from him in great harmony of spirits. "Mr. Horton," says she, "is a very agreeable man, and very much of a gentleman; but that Dr. Atkins seems to be quite a precise formal pedant," adds she, "and I don't like him at all." Miss Leonora however said, Dr. Atkins was a very gentleman-like man, and of a good family; and she did not see why a man should be called a pedant merely because he was a scholar, if he did not seem to value himself too much upon it, and superciliously despise every other accomplishment. Mr. Nonsuch said Leonora was in the right of it; "I saw at once," says he, "Dr. Atkins was a man of family, and

Mr.

Mr. Horton a man of very good sense." Miss Matilda said nothing, and at present escaped the censures of her good aunt Sacharissa.

But as soon as the gentlemen had left Mr. Nonsuch's the day that they dined there, her virtuous aunt fell foul upon poor Matilda with a vengeance: She wondered at her officious forwardness in taking up a gentleman's leg into her lap to mend his stocking; and reproached her with behaving in quite a coquettish manner, and in a way that young people would have been ashamed of twenty years ago. Miss Matilda replied, that she had not spoken five words to Mr. Horton the whole day. "Spoken five words,"

says her aunt, “yes, yes, you spoke too intelligibly: no words could express your meaning so emphatically as your wanton looks; words may deceive, but no one can mistake or be imposed upon by the language of the eyes. In short, a man that knows the world so well as Horton does, must despise such a forward girl, and think you an absolute prostitute.”

“Come, come, sister,” says old Nonsuch, “you seem to understand the language of the eyes full as well as Matilda. However, if little Maud likes the man, she shall have him: I can see as far into mankind as other people; I can perceive Horton is a rising man, and will make a figure,

in

in the law; and little Maud shews a good taste." "I wonder at your imprudence, Brother," says Mrs. Sacharissa, "to talk to girls in this manner, who are hardly out of their hanging-sleeves." "Hanging-sleeves! Aunt," says Miss Leonora, "I am sure sister Matty is but a year and half younger than me; and I was four and twenty last Candlemas-day." Aunt Sacharissa made no reply; but from this time watched her niece with the penetrating eye of jealousy; and thenceforth became the rival and the persecutor of poor Matilda: so that the young ladies had reason to wish their walk to Columella's woods might be kept a secret from their aunt Sacharissa.

C H A P. XVIII.

WHEN, the three gentlemen had parted from the ladies and their young cousin, they returned up the valley by the root-house, where they were invited by the evening odours of the jessamine and the honeysuckles to rest a little; when Hortensius cries out,

"I burn, I burn, as when thro' ripen'd corn

"By driving winds the spreading flames are borne."

"Matilda," says he, "is a charming girl, sprightly, sensible, and dis-

creet;"

CHAPTER

creet ; and I cannot live without her.

Atticus, tho' with a decent reserve, said Leonora was not inferior to her sister in every amiable quality ; neither in sense or discretion. After venting their own raptures however, they naturally resumed the subject of their friend Columella's unhappy amour. Amongst other things, Atticus said he had not met with a more effectual remedy for love, than that prescribed by the philosopher Crates : that is, for an imprudent attachment ; *Amori parum honesto.* " He recommends a regular process," says he, " first, fasting ; secondly, time or absence ; and thirdly, an halter. First, says

the

the philosopher, abstain from food of every kind, eight and forty hours; and if that does not subdue the inordinate passion, try a month's absence; and if that proves ineffectual, why—hang yourself."

"Pooh! Pooh!" says Hortensius; "you mistake the thing: the *halter* is only a metaphorical term, or symbol, to express the marriage *noose*; the *vinculum jugale*. *Tuck* yourself up; that is, to a wife; which I believe as often proves a cure for love, or at least subdues the inordinance of the passion, as a literal suspension, or *tucking up*, can possibly do."

"Well then," says Atticus, "if Columella has really proceeded so far

far in this unhappy affair, as to be irrevocably engaged ; if he has tried fasting and absence, let me again intreat him to try the *vinclum jugale*, the marriage noose ; and not to defer the fulfilling his engagements even a week longer.

"For only consider, my dear friend, the natural consequences of such an intercourse, and imagine yourself to become the father of two or three children. The love of our offspring is, I suppose (as for wise reasons it ought to be) the strongest instinct in human nature. Now, what a shock must it be to a parent, to see a poor helpless infant, in whom perhaps his own happiness is centered, not only born under a legal incap-

city of inheriting its father's fortune ; but also exposed, tho' innocent, to the slights and reproaches of a malicious world. That one consideration, in my opinion (as all civilized nations are at present constituted) is a sufficient argument against concubinage, and in favour of lawful wedlock."

" Very true," says Hortensius ; and tho' it is commonly said that a man is never completely ruined till he has married his maid ; yet, in my opinion, his ruin is pretty nearly compleat when he so far indulges the ignoble flame, as to take any freedoms with a servant. In those circumstances, there is no better remedy than marriage ; it is the only

only method of repairing the damage both to the master and the maid. The being cut for the stone is a bad thing ; but in a certain stage of the disease it is the only remedy, and not the cause of the malady ; which has probably been brought on by a long previous course of luxury, indolence, and irregularity.

"*Obe ! jam satis est !*" cries Columella ; "enough ! enough ! my good friends. I will not be angry at the freedom of your advice (as I know it is kindly intended) but you must give me leave to consult my own opinion, and my own convenience, in a point so essential to my own happiness."

As

As Columella however appeared a little piqued, they desisted from any further expostulations on this subject; and left what they had already said, to operate on his own good sense and generous disposition.

C H A P. XIX.

THE next day when Hortensius and Atticus were going to make their afternoon's visit, they were not much surprised to find Columella unwilling to accompany them: for they could not but have observed, that Mrs. Betty had conceived a sort of jealousy of the young ladies of Non-such-house: and as that was almost the

the only family where Columella visited, the poor girl was probably apprehensive of their inspiring him with sentiments detrimental to her interest. As therefore they no longer stood in need of any introduction, they took their walk, unattended by their friend Columella.

When they came to Nonsuch-house, tho' Mrs. Sacharissa Nonsuch had backed her brother's general invitation, and tho' she was always dressed in form, and fit to receive company : yet as their repeating their visit so soon was rather an unexpected favour ; and as on reflecting upon Hortensius's behaviour, she began to suspect that her Nieces were the principal objects of this piece of politeness, she was a

little disconcerted ; and said, truly that she should *not be at home* ; and immediately pulling the parlour-door after her with a spirited jerk, retired to her own apartment. After sitting a few minutes however in an attitude of disgust, on casting a side glance at her looking-glass, she fancied there was something striking in her appearance : she therefore turned herself suddenly full on her toilette, added a few ornamental trinkets to her usual dress, and unexpectedly made her appearance in the parlour, whilst Atticus and Hortensius were engaged in a sort of private chat with their respective favourites.

Mrs. Sacharissa's entrance was somewhat matron-like and stately,

and tossing her chair into the middle of the room, she almost eclipsed her blooming nieces. Atticus however still directed the chief part of his discourse to Miss Leonora : but Hortensius, who was of a more versatile behaviour, and having been rather more in the world, entered more readily into the secret views of the different characters he met with, politely addressed himself to the aunt, as a lady, who even in point of seniority claimed a degree of precedence. This softened a little the truculent features and austere countenance of the good lady ; but her niece Matilda going out of the room for some reason or other, " Matilda ! child !" says the careful aunt, " make your curt'sey when you go out of the room ;

young people now-a-days are so very free and easy there's no bearing it."

"Why, to be sure, sister," says old Nonsuch, "things are greatly altered since you and I were *young* folks." "Pray, brother, speak for yourself," says she; "I hope you would not make me as old as you are."

"No, no, Mrs. Sacharissa, I am quite in the winter of my days, and you are only in your autumn!"

"Autumn! indeed!" says she, "I don't know what you mean by your *winter*, nor your *autumn* neither."

"Autumn, Madam," says Hortensius, "is a *fruitful* season, and I am sure no one can form any idea of *winter*, where the sun shines so bright."

This

This forced compliment did not at all please Mrs. Sacharissa; she replied therefore with a disdainful air, that she did not want compliments, but could not bear her brother's vulgar common-place raillery against old maids; and added, that it was very hard that a woman must be ranked in that number as soon as she was turned of *five and twenty.*

As Mrs. Sacharissa did not condescend to solicit a pool at quadrille, and as a sort of cold formality and critical reserve prevailed in the conversation the whole afternoon, Atticus and Hortensius did not think proper to prolong their visit; but by the joint efforts of the young ladies, who are generally fertile in

expedients on those occasions, they contrived to meet often in separate parties, without the knowledge of their prudent aunt Sacharissa.

C H A P. XX.

WHEN poor Peter of Pomfret*

(as Mr. Nonsuch used to call the little Rector) had paid the last mournful office of respect to his departed wife, Columella and his two friends made him a morning visit, both to condole with, and to comfort him.

As soon as they were come in and

* In allusion to a character in Shakespeare's King John.

seated,

seated, " Ah ! my good friends," says the Rector, " this is a most remarkable stroke of Providence (for I cannot avoid bringing it home to myself) and seems directly levelled at my bold presumptuous doctrine, " that every one has it in his power to be happy, if it is not his own fault." I am now convinced, by too fatal a proof, of the contrary. It is both unnecessary and impious to preach up and encourage mankind in the love of this world, to which they are already too much devoted; but I am now sufficiently weaned from it and all its enjoyments; this whole world is now become a desert to me, and if it were not for these two dear pledges of our mutual affection (pointing to a little boy and girl)

girl whom he had been caressing)
I should pray heartily to be delivered
from it immediately."

"Come, come, Mr. Pomfret,"
says Atticus, "this is not talking
like a Christian, or like a man. I
cannot expect you, at present, abso-
lutely to stifle the feelings of huma-
nity; but we are exhorted and com-
manded by the highest authority,
"not to be immoderately afflicted,
as men without *hope*."

"Yes, yes," says Hortensius, "this
is a loss by no means desperate or
irreparable: Mr. Pomfret, in a decent
time, must look out for another
help meet for himself, and not in-
dulge too far a fruitless sorrow."
"Oh! Sir," says Pomfret, "do not
name it! I am now astonished at the
unfeeling

unfeeling wantonness of mankind, in continually venting their insipid jokes on these sad occasions. No, my dear Louisa," adds he in a tender apostrophe,

" Should Heaven create another Eve—

" ————— Yet loss of thee

" Would never from my heart. No, no, I feel

" The link of nature draw me; flesh of my

flesh, ~~perish'd~~ ~~and~~ ~~stomach~~ or

" Soul of my soul thou art."

MILTON.

" I can easily conceive a man's marrying again for convenience, for a companion, for a partner in domestic cares, and a hundred other reasons: but where is "that Promethean art," which can re-animate and restore life and warmth to the affections, when once extinguished or separated

from their first beloved object? We may have a second mistress, a second companion, and a second friend; but we cannot have a second wife; I mean where we have lived long and *happily* with the first, united in the bands of a mutual love, cemented by a long intercourse of kind offices, and reciprocal endeavours to promote the happiness of each other.*”

“ Well, Doctor,” says Columella, “ I am sorry you should be so soon convinced of the indefensibleness of your hypothesis, in regard to the possibility of happiness in this life— But come and dine with us to-day;

* The Doctor should have made one or two more exceptions to his general rule; as, where the wife was only a league of interest, &c.

for I am convinced by my good friends here, that there is no grief but what may be amused at least, and somewhat alleviated by society; though time alone must work the cure in a case like your's." said ergo

The Rector said, he would accompany them; But Atticus desiring to look into the garden which Columella had laid out for him in the cottage taste, Columella said he would take that opportunity of speaking to a farmer in the parish, with whom he had business, and which he had too long neglected, and return to them immediately.

Whilst they were walking in the garden, Hortensius could not forbear remarking to the Rector, how much their old friend Columella was

156. COLUMELLA; or,
altered in his temper, since they were
at the university together.

The Rector replied, that his living so much alone, and having nothing of more consequence to engage his attention, had made him fretful and provoked at trifles, which people of less delicacy or more busy, would either not feel, or would laugh at or neglect. "And, I am afraid, Columella may have a little distressed himself," adds he, "by these expensive buildings, and other unprofitable improvements about his place; and that may sometimes have soured his temper; for he is really a very good-natured, friendly man; and I should have been extremely happy in such a neighbour, and have been more frequently with him, but for another

other circumstance, which perhaps you may by this time give some guess at.

“What is that?” says Atticus, with some quickness.

“Why,” says Pomfret, “I should not mention it if the whole neighbourhood did not speak so freely of Columella’s imprudence in this respect: in short, it is the improper connection with his house-keeper, which I believe he makes no secret of, or at least which he takes no care to conceal from his other domestics, nor indeed from me. For whenever I have gone thither of late, she has always made the tea, and appeared as mistress of the house; which indeed is the reason that I could not in decency

cency go thither as a visitor any longer.

Hortensius then said, that they had taken the liberty of talking to him on the subject; and as they found he had so unalterable an attachment to her, they had even advised him to make her his lawful wife, as the best remedy in such circumstances.

The Rector said, that was a liberty which he could not take; but owned, that as she had already so great an influence over him, he also thought it the wisest, or at least the most virtuous resolution he could take.

Whilst they were thus adjusting his affairs, Columella returned, and the company soon after adjourned

to

to his house to dinner; where they spent a chearful afternoon: and Mr. Pomfret himself, in their company, seemed for a while to have forgotten his distress; tho' by his frequent sighs and gloomy intervals, he seemed to reproach himself with injustice to the memory of his dear Louisa; and, like Cassius,

" He smil'd in such a sort
" As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
" That could be mov'd to smile at any thing,"
after so irreparable a loss.

C H A P. XXI.

ATTICUS and Hortensius had now been a fortnight at Columella's ; the time which they at first intended to pass with their old friend. They prolonged their stay however for one day, to receive another visit from Mr. Nonsuch and his two daughters, who came in form to take their leave ; but unaccompanied by Mrs. Sacharissa Nonsuch, who was indisposed. She indeed had discovered how matters were likely to go, and had remonstrated to her brother, with great warmth, on the occasion. She now confessed indeed that Dr. Atkins

might

might be a tolerable match for her elder niece, he having a real establishment as head of a college : but that Mr. Horton had no pretensions to so good a fortune, or so mere a girl as Matilda ; and she thought that young Whiskey (who had also made overtures) if she must have a husband, would be a better and a more suitable match.

On being reminded by her brother of the character she had at first formed of Hortensius, she said she liked him very well as a partner at cards ; but should think herself (who was nearer of an age with him) very foolish indeed to take a mere adventurer as a partner for life.

In short, in her present temper of mind, it is not to be supposed
that

that aunt Sacharissa would accompany her brother and her nieces in a visit of mere civility.

Hortensius and Atticus, however, managed matters so well with the two young ladies and the old gentleman, that they obtained leave of the former to correspond with them when they left the country; and a promise from the latter to bring his daughters to town in the winter, where Atticus generally spent a month for the sake of his friend Hortensius's company.

C H A P. XXII.

THE day before they left the country, as Hortensius was rummaging a portfolio, which always lay in the parlour-window, for some paper; amongst other loose sheets, blotted and scribbled over, he found the following list of subjects for poetry (as Columella had always an itch for scribbling) and this sketch of a soliloquy; which shews what trifling objects frequently employ men of genius in their solitude: of which Swift in his dotage was not a more flagrant instance than Columella.

" S U B-

“SUBJECTS.

“The young man and his dog;
“a soliloquy.”

“Meditation on a farthing candle.”

“Epigram on a tobacco-stopper.”

“Ode to Chlorinda, on mending
“an hole in her stocking.”

“To Sophronia, on her pickling
“cucumbers: an epistle.”

“Bottled ale: a dithyrambic.”

“Fornication triumphant; or, the
“world ruled by harlots: a satire.”

N. B. The last article was erased.

As the soliloquy, or conversation-piece shews the particular turn of Columella's mind, Hortensius thought it no breach of friendship to transcribe it.

*The Young Man and his Dog; a
Conversation-piece.*

"And the young man's dog went with them."

TOBIT.

"WITH what pleasure and satisfaction, attended by thee, my faithful Pompey, do I retire from the malignant crowd, beneath the shade of this branching oak ! Tho' the whole world frown upon me, thou art always ready to receive me with an hearty welcome ; I had almost said, with a smiling countenance ; with a countenance at least of joy and exultation. You leap and brisk about ; you stretch out your friendly paw, and solicit my regard with such expressive looks, that you seem only to want articulate sounds to

tell

tell me in so many words, *I am
heartily glad to see you.*

“ In the world, I meet with nothing but pride, envy, insincerity, and ingratitude. One man is friendly and familiar in private, but knows me not, or slighteth me in public places: another envies me the slender portion I enjoy of learning or reputation: a person to whose rise I have formerly contributed, no longer regards me in his exalted situation: even those friends whom I love and esteem, ridicule or censure me for my singularities, with a freedom that disgusts me.

“ But thou, my dear Pompey, art invariable in thy attachment. Thou followest me in the field and on the road, my companion and my guard.

If

If I am engaged in my study, thou sleepest at my door the whole day; and with incessant vigilance watchest at my gate and defendest my house from thieves by night. Thou art a friend to my friends, and a foe to my foes: the former thou receivest with sincere carefes; at the latter thou growlest with an honest surliness, and wilt not be bribed to betray thy master.

" For all these faithful services thou thinkest thyself amply rewarded by a stroke of my hand; and royally feasted by a bone from my table.

" My dear Pompey, while I am thus meditating thy panegyric, here thou liest at my feet, unconscious of my regard or of thy own merit; but ready, on the least alarm,

to

to defend thy master from impertinent intruders on *his* tranquillity and *tby* repose."

C H A P. XXIII.

WHEN the three friends were at breakfast on the morning in which they took leave of each other, Columella said, with a sigh, that he did not know whether he ought to thank them for this visit or not; "which," says he, "has made me as happy as I can be for a fortnight past, but which will render me more miserable for many months to come. The pleasure which I have received in your company will be contrasted

contrasted by that melancholy which succeeds to all our most exquisite enjoyments. I can support my solitude with tolerable cheerfulness in the summer-time, and in fine weather; but you will now leave me for the whole winter to the horror of my own thoughts, and a prey to gloom and dejection of spirits in the most gloomy season of the year."

Atticus replied, that the best remedies for dejection of spirits were constant employment and a good conscience. "By a good conscience, however," says he, "I don't only mean a mind free from guilt; but what the Romans called "*"mens recti consilia;*" "*a mind conscious of right behaviour in every occurrence of life."* I would therefore again re-

commend to you, my good friend, to do what your conscience dictates in regard to your unhappy connection ; which, I dare say, will make you easy in your mind : and also what your little Rector has hinted about taking one of your farms into your hands, which will engage and divert your thoughts, not only from the real evils of life, but from the imaginary ones ; and prevent you from fretting yourself about such trifles as the inaccuracies or even vulgarisms of Mrs. Betty's language and conversation."

" Yes, yes," says Hortensius ; " I am now convinced, my friend, that all your maladies have their original in the want of some regular pursuit to engage your attention.

For

For though we had conceived an high idea of your happiness in this retired plan of life, and in the midst of our fatigue and hurry of business quite envied your choice; yet I am now persuaded that a life of mere indolence and inactivity, must in the end prove irksome and disgusting: too great an abundance of leisure, like too great a plenty of riches, and the good things of this life, must cloy the imagination, and blunt the relish of every amusement. Indolence, as an ingenious female writer observes *, disqualifies a man, even for the enjoyment of pleasure. Having no pursuit, we have nothing to set our faculties in motion;

* Miss H-n-h M--re's Essays.

we are perplexed and puzzled how to employ our time; and have nothing to do, but to muse and philosophize upon the vanity and emptiness of all sublunary enjoyments."

" Yes," says Atticus; " yet the mischief is not merely personal, but attended with considerable detriment to society. When every individual is deserting his rank, and flying from his colours, and retiring from the field of battle, who is to sustain the duty of the day? I am no friend to ambition, nor an enemy to retirement, or a country life. Every one was not born to be a statesman, a general, or a commanding officer; but every one was designed by Providence to act some part in the great drama

drama of life: let every one therefore consult his own talents, and act accordingly."

"But this absurd passion for *retirement*," says Hortensius, "is become a prevailing evil in the world. We are all for quitting the stage before we have performed our parts. every little clerk in office must have his villa, and every tradesman his country-house. A cheesemonger retires to his little pasteboard edifice on Turnham Green, and when smoking his pipe under his codling-hedge on his gravel walk made with coal-ashes, fancies himself a second Scipio or Cincinnatus in his retreat; and returns with reluctance to town on Monday night, or perhaps defers it till Tuesday morning, re-

gardless of his shop, and his inquisitive and disgusted customers."

"Yes, says Atticus; "and I remember even in Oxford, my old barber cut my face once or twice, while he was haranguing upon the felicity, and venting his wishes for a snug rural retreat. All his ambition was to retire into some country town, where there was a good ring of bells, and two sermons on a Sunday."

"And yet," says Hortensius, "these fantastical recluses are generally disappointed of their promised felicity in a country life; and either contrive to bring down their town friends to visit them daily in their solitude, or else soon return to the place from whence they came. Some indeed,

indeed, being quite disgusted, or not being able to breathe in the smoke of town, yet not finding that happiness which they expected in the country, shift the scene from one place to another, till death overtakes them in their career, and lodges them quietly in their grave; entitled to the well-known epitaph,

"*Hic quiescit, qui nunquam quietivit;*"

"Here rests the man, who never was at rest."

"In short, these restless, unsettled searchers after happiness, are not unlike the ungodly in king David's time, whom he had seen flourishing like a green bay-tree: "But I went by," says he, "and lo he was gone: I sought him, and his *place* could no where be found." His *place* is

no where to be found! that is, his Chinese rails are demolished by a person of an higher and more exquisite taste; a blank wall is erected to conceal the house from the gaping traveller: and in short, his *place* is so entirely new-modelled by some new candidate for retired happiness, that it has lost its identity; we seek for it in vain, and it is no where to be found."

Columella smiled at his friend's vehemence, and owned he himself had observed one remarkable instance of this inconstancy of mankind in their researches after happiness. "A fellow," says he, "who kept a little ale-house in the suburbs of Bath, where I have found it convenient to put my horse for these ten years, whenever

whenever I go thither ; this man having a well-accustomed house, had made a tolerable competence by the time he was fifty ; and being an old bachelor, retired to a neat box which he had bought, about half a mile out of town, on the most dusty part of the Bristol road. Here, by gaping about and smoking his pipe all day, he contrived to pass one summer in tolerable spirits : but on the approach of winter, he grew dull and melancholy, and before Christmas took a lodging at a gingerbread-shop in the suburbs, next door to his own ale-house ; and by looking out at his window during the winter, and fitting at the door in the summer, he seems again to enjoy a tolerably comfortable existence.

I 5 “ However,

"However," adds Columella, with a more serious air, I hope you would not draw any argument against an elegant and *philosophical* retirement, from such instances as these; from people that are incapable of thinking, or perhaps of reading, and supplying the want of company with the conversation of poets and philosophers, and the greatest men of antiquity."

"Why," says Atticus, "this *philosophical* retirement appears plausible enough in speculation; but, I am afraid, you have found it very unsatisfactory in practice. You fancy yourself an hermit and a philosopher; but I am afraid your vulgar neighbours look upon you as an enthusiast at least, if not a mad-man."

"Yes," says Hortensius, "people may talk of their Arcadia's and their Elysian fields, and I am sure we have spent a very happy fortnight in Columella's delightful retreat, and I should wish to spend a few months every summer in the country; but rather than be confined the whole winter to so absolute a solitude, I had rather live in Wapping or in Petticoat Lane, and dine every day at the three-penny ordinary, where the knives and forks are chained to the table, and the ladder removed for fear the saturated guest should make his escape without paying his reckoning."

Whilst Hortensius and Atticus were thus declaiming against an indolent, inactive life, Columella's man Peter came to the parlour-

door, to let them know that the horses were ready at the gate (as Atticus had privately ordered him): Upon which Atticus starts up, takes Columella by the hand, and wishes him all health and happiness; observing that he always took an abrupt leave of his friends, for two reasons; one was to diminish the shock of parting, which a formal valediction generally augmented; and the other, to avoid that interruption which the loitering departure of many people gives to the business of a family for a whole morning. Hortensius followed his example; and in a few minutes they were mounted and gone.

C H A P. XXIV.

HORTENSius and Atticus, on their return from Columella's, continues the canon, called upon me (as I mentioned in the beginning of this narrative) and gave me this account of their old friend ; which induced me, tho' not before the end of the following summer, to make a visit to my friend Pomfret, the Rector of the parish, with whom I was more intimate than with Columella. As for poor Pomfret, I found him tolerably cheerful ; and, as I hoped, entirely resigned to the loss of his beloved

Louisa.

Louisa. But he sighing assured me
it still lay heavy at his heart;

Hæret lateri lethalis arundo;

"The fatal shaft still rankles in my breast;"

says he. "I mourn incessantly in private for a calamity, to which my neighbours think me entirely reconciled."

I found however that after the first tumult of passion subsided, my friend had been amusing his grief with the following stanzas; which he gave me leave to transcribe: and tho' they would be too great a digression, and too grave to insert in such a narrative, yet as they seem to flow from the heart, if you will give me leave I will read them.

On

On the Death of a much-loved Wife.

NATURE submits—No more she needs
Our friendly aid—The conflict's o'er;
A transient calm the storm succeeds,
And now, alas ! she breathes no more.

II.

Yet smiles attest a soul serene ;
Her mortal frailties are forgiven :
Let hope illume the tragic scene ;
My Lucia's pardon's seal'd in heaven.

III.

But ah ! to what far distant coast
Is flown the spirit of my dear ?
In what wild region art thou lost ?
Oh ! gentle spirit, tell me where.

IV.

Whether beyond the radiant pole,
Unnumber'd leagues on wings convey'd,
(Where comets blaze, or planets roll)
In azure depths of space thou'rt stray'd.

V. No,

V.

No, rather 'midst the angelic throng
 To thy blest soul a place is given,
 Where cherubs chant immortal songs,
 With seraphs, round the throne of Heav'n.

VI.

Perhaps with sympathetic care,
 Invisible to mortal eyes,
 Thou hover'st in the fields of air,
 A witness to our tears and sighs.

VII.

There pleas'd, thy sweet maternal love
 Our youthful offspring still surveys,
 Sent by th' indulgent powers above,
 The guardian of their thoughtless days.

VIII.

Oh ! let me burst this clay-built shrine
 That veils my Lucia from my sight,
 Unite my raptur'd soul to thine,
 And seek th' empyreal realms of light.

IX.

There undisturb'd by grief or pain,
 Let hymns of praise our hearts employ;
 Till each lov'd friend we meet again,
 And endless bliss in heav'n enjoy.

But

But let me return to the affairs of Columella : The two plans so strongly recommended by his friends Atticus and Hortensius had been at length adopted ; he had taken one of his farms into his hands, and had made Mrs. Betty his lawful wife, who in a few months after had made him the father, if not the joyful father, of a fine boy. She now presided at his table, and made a very decent appearance ; though Columella's great anxiety about the little inaccuracies of her language, and his correcting indiscreetly any trifling solecisms in her expressions, often put her and her company out of countenance, and made them attend to many barbarisms, which might otherwise have passed over entirely unobserved.

As

As to the farm which he had taken in hand, partly as an agreeable amusement, and partly to augment his income, it did not promise, by the Rector's account, to answer either of those ends. For Columella trusted too much to servants to make it advantageous ; and his nice feelings so far aggravated every trifling difficulty attending the management of it, that, instead of an agreeable amusement, it proved a constant source of vexation and uneasiness.

He now read over Virgil's Georgics with a practical view, and studied the modern writers on agriculture ; but either by his mistaking the precepts, or his hind not executing them properly, his fields hardly

ly paid the expence of cultivation. At every wet or very dry season, and indeed at every ill-timed shower of rain, Columella fretted and murmur-ed beyond measure.

By the contrivance of a neighbour-ing farmer, on whose bulls he de-pended, or by the negligence of his own servant in not procuring a bull at a proper time, some of his cows every year proved barren; and were either to be sold at a consider-able loss, or kept unprofitably to the next season.

A stupid baker, or a knavish mil-ler, would detain him a whole morn-ing in making a bargain for a load of wheat; and, by their importu-nity, get it below the market-price, merely that he might get rid of them.

And

And when he himself was to be the purchaser, for seed, or on any other occasion, then there was a conspiracy amongst the farmers (or at least he fancied so) to make him pay an exorbitant price for it.

The very mole-catcher disturbed Columella's tranquillity of soul. For instead of agreeing with him by the year, he chose to give him two-pence for every mole; and nothing could convince Columella, but that the fellow turned loose all the moles in the country into his field.

But, to crown all these little distresses, Columella had got a law-suit on his hands, to ascertain his bounds, which had been neglected during his minority; and the anxiety attending this transaction, was

by

by no means favourable to that com-
posure of mind which becomes an
hermit or a philosopher.

C H A P. XXV.

THE affairs of Hortensius and Atticus however, at this period, were in a more prosperous situation. As they knew their friend Columella's embarrassed state of mind, and had now formed so intimate a connection with the Nonsuch-family, they were come down for the vacation to Mr. Nonsuch's house; and, while I stayed in the country, were actually joined in marriage, Atticus to Miss Leonora Nonsuch, and Hortensius to Miss Matilda. But as their aunt Sacharissa disapproved of her brother's proceed-
ings

ings on this occasion, she would not honour the nuptials with her presence. The two gentlemen and their brides spent the rest of the summer at Nonsuch-house, and then withdrew to their respective homes ; Atticus to his magnificent apartments in college, and Hortensius to a neat house in town ; and I have had the pleasure of hearing, that they are extremely happy in their several situations.

C H A P. XXVI.

THE next news we heard of Columella was in the public papers. Some of his facetious neighbours, it seems, had represented our peaceful Anchoret to the King, as peculiarly well qualified to attend the execution

execution of criminals, and to act as sheriff of the county; and his majesty had graciously condescended to nominate him as one of the three for serving that right-worshipful office. This was an honour of which tho' some people might be ambitious, yet the pompous circumstances attending it by no means suited the taste of our philosophical recluse; so far from it, that he considered it as a most insupportable distress, from which he was at a loss how to extricate himself. Upon consulting his friend Pomfret however, he found he had no other method of getting quit of the intended dignity, than by applying to the afore-mentioned justice of the quorum, whom Columella had represented

presented as unable to write his own name : and, notwithstanding his boasted plan of independence, was obliged to devote himself entirely on all future elections, to the interest of his right honourable neighbour, Lord W—.

Tho' by this means Columella had extricated himself from his present embarrassment, and, as he hoped, secured himself from any future disturbance of the same kind ; yet it was near Christmas before this important point was settled to his satisfaction. He now however hugged himself again in his elbow-chair, and gave himself up to his usual indolence and inactivity for the remaining part of the winter.

But at the Lent Assizes, which

being long

I

fell

fell out pretty early this year, his repose was again interrupted by a summons to attend a special jury, at the county-town, thirty miles from home, in a cause of some importance in his own neighbourhood. This was another unforeseen distress ; and which he was determined, whatever was the consequence, not to submit to. Accordingly he soon found to his cost, that a considerable fine was to be levied upon his personal estate for non-attendance, which he paid with great reluctance ; and thro' mere indolence, would probably have suffered himself to be outlawed rather than pay it at all, if it had not been for the prudent advice of his foresaid neighbour, my friend Bos-

ter of Pomfret. These distresses might have befallen any other country gentleman ; but were doubly felt by the philosophical Columella.

C H A P. XXVII.

AS I keep up an occasional correspondence with my friend Pomfret, the next news I heard was, that in a few years after his marriage, Columella, from continual fretting and vexation, had been laid up with the gout ; and that it had returned so frequently, and the fits were so irregular, that he had been advised, as the only means of relieving him, to drink the Bath waters. Having made the experiment, and receiving considerable benefit

from them, he thought it adviseable, as the least expence, to take a house in Bath for twelve months.

Here he seemed to live with much more comfort and satisfaction for a few weeks. The novelty of their situation, and the variety of objects, had a good effect upon Columella's spirits, and Mrs. Milward was quite happy in the change. But this calm was of short duration; Columella having brought with him the same unhappy temper which his indolent way of life had first produced, and his gouty complaint increased. This peevish temper soon proved very inconvenient to him, and led him into many substantial evils.

The house which he had taken was situated at the corner of one of

those little pavements or parades, as they are called in Bath, which are the rendezvous of all the idle boys and blackguards about the town. This place was frequented every hour in the day by a variety of little gambling parties, some at chuck-farthing, some at marbles, some at pitch and hustle; whose disputable claims were a continual source of noise and altercation.

A man of business, or a real philosopher, would have neglected or despised these trifling inconveniences. But Columella's irritable nerves could not long bear with these tumultuous proceedings: he therefore attempted to disperse them with an air of authority, which such licentious assemblies can hardly brook,

even in a magistrate vested with legal power, and which therefore they treated with contempt and insult in a stranger as Columella was. The more he rose in his menaces, the more noisy and insolent they grew; and having discovered the vulnerable part in Columella's character, they contrived to gall and harrass him perpetually. The boys would now often slip privately to his door, and give him the *randan* in such a manner as almost startled him into convulsions; and Columella was frequently seen out on the parade pursuing them with a whip or a cane, to the no small diversion of his neighbours.

By this time all the little ambulatory tradesmen had got their cue,

and exerted themselves with redoubled force under Columella's window. The milk-woman's ear-piercing pipe tortured his nerves with reiterated notes; the chimney-sweeper's boys generally succeeded in the same key; the pickled-oyster-man prolonged his hollow tone with an ominous solemnity.

An handsome peasant, who came two or three times a week with an horse-load of potatoes, as she was a comely girl, and her voice tolerably harmonious, would have been rather a pleasing object to Columella while he stood gazing at the window; as he frequently did; but here the delicacy of his taste was equally tortured by the illiterate girl's orthography; for instead of *potatoes*, she uttered

uttered it potatur-r-r-r-rs; her tongue vibrating against the roof of her mouth with so rough and violent an aspirate, that Columella could not bear it with any tolerable patience, but more than once opened his window and bid her stop her bawling tongue. The poor girl was a little daunted at first by Columella's rebukes; but after a few days took courage, and returned it in the true Doric dialect, or Somersetshire lingo; with some allusion to Columella's secret history into the bargain, which by some means or other had transpired; and this, added to another circumstance equally trifling, occasioned his departure from Bath before his year expired.

An adjoining house, which pro-

jected a little before Columella's, formed a convenient nook for porters and chairmen, and sometimes well-dressed gentlemen, to perform their urinary discharges against the wall; whom Columella, throwing up the fash, would frequently reproach with want of decency and good manners: which proceeding of his, however, rather increased, than checked this offensive practice.

One day as he and his wife were standing at the window in a pensive mood, or what is called, *a Swiss meditation*, an old Welch Captain turned his face to the wall for the 'foresaid purpose, though he could not avoid perceiving that he was necessarily exposed to the lady's observation. Columella could not bear

the

the indecency ; but, as usual, vented his wrath in reproachful language. The Cambro-Briton, whose profession, as well as his national consequence, had never suffered him to pocket an affront, as soon as he had adjusted the affair in hand, applied to the knocker of the door with great vehemence, to demand satisfaction for the insult. Mrs. Milward had foreseen the consequence, and had run herself to the door, and with great civility intreated the Captain not to resent what had happened ; for that her poor husband had been ill of a nervous fever, and hardly knew what he said or did, with more to the same purpose ; by which means she with great

difficulty subdued the choler of the man of war, and nothing in this world could induce him to return to England again. This however, with many other adventures of the like nature, determined Mrs. Milward rather to submit to anything in the country than be exposed to the affronts or ridicule of people in a public place.

C H A P. XXVIII.

BY the last accounts which I have received from my friend the Rector, I am informed that Columella now lives sequestered from all kind of society, and that he has let his farm again, and has even neglected entirely his romantic place: his expensive ruins are gone

to ruin ; his urns and mottos are thrown down and defaced ; his forest-seats made into faggots and burnt ; and, in short, nature has resumed her dominion in all her wildness and irregularity, in those scenes where even Columella's natural taste had found it necessary to restrain or direct her luxuriancy.

His friend Atticus had sent him an electrical machine as a present, and desired him to amuse himself with making electrical experiments ; and Hortensius, finding him so often involved in law-suits, had presented him with Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England, to enable him at least to talk with his attorney. But Columella had so long indulged himself in superficial reading,

that he could hardly get through the first entertaining volume of that work; and then he found his head so giddy in reading a Treatise upon Electrics and Non-electrics, Electrics per se, and Conductors of Electricity, that he had almost, in a passion, demolished the whole apparatus.

As Columella has not appeared at church for some time, he has been visited, I find, by the popish priest, with his leopard-skin housing, whom I mentioned as living in the neighbourhood.

After frequent conferences with this gentleman, and reading a book or two which he had recommended upon the subject, Columella said, that he would not quarrel with him about many of their trifling ceremonies:

nies : that some external rites might be necessary to keep up a sense of religion in the unreflecting multitude ; that he had no objection to sprinkling his face with holy water, or to making the sign of the cross upon every utensil about his house ; that he loved painting, and had all imaginable respect for the pictures of Saint Ursula, Saint Barbara, Saint Alban, and his friend Saint Amphibolus* : " Nay," says he, " I can never forbear wishing at least, if not praying for the happiness of any departed friend : but, Sir, many of your tenets are founded upon pre-

* This was only the Greek name of St. Alban's cloke ; which, in ages of ignorance, was inserted in the Roman calendar.

See Middleton's Letter from Rome.

tended

COLUMELLA; or,
tended facts, which contradict the
truth of history; many of them are
contrary to the express words of
scripture; and some of them, give
me leave to say, are shocking to rea-
son and to the common sense of man-
kind."

Columella listened with more at-
tention to a well-meaning Metho-
dist in his neighbourhood, who, find-
ing him in that low-spirited, un-
settled state of mind, had conceiv-
ed hopes of making him a proselyte.
And Columella had even consulted
Mr. Pomfret on some of the con-
troverted points amongst them. Pom-
fret said, he believed their inten-
tion was very good; but added,
that as he did not think he had
any *call*, so he owned he had no

Bobnot

taste

taste for controversies of that kind. He thought christianity a very plain and simple thing : that it evidently inculcated, in every page, our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourselves ; and revealed to us the comfortable doctrines of pardon and redemption. But as for those subtle distinctions in regard to some controverted points of religion, with which they puzzle their followers, he thought the knowledge of them no more necessary for the generality of Christians, than the electrical jargon which Columella was so angry with, was to people in common life ; or than the distinguishing nicely between the gross atmospherical, phlogistic air, which vulgar mortals breathe, and the pure, defecated,

phlo-

phlogisticated air, manufactured by the ingenious Dr. Pr—stly, was necessary to a bellows-maker, or a performer on the Scotch bagpipes*.

Columella, however, contrived to divert his melancholy with this kind of speculations; and with the care of his three little boys, who now began to be entertaining company: and tho' the eldest of them was but just turned of ten years old, yet he had already destined him and his

* By the way, as the Editor of this narrative is an invalid, and would willingly keep his automaton, or material system, out of the medical watch-menders hands, if possible; he cannot but wish that the good Doctor would oblige the public with a few phials of his genuine dephlogisticated air, sealed with his own coat of arms; as the late Sir John Hill vouchsafed to do with his Essence of Water-dock, &c.

two brothers, to their several professions, without consulting either their genius or their inclinations.

The eldest he proposed to enter under an eminent solicitor in Chancery; a man full of business, and where consequently his son would be constantly employed. The second he intended to put an apprentice to a tradesman in Manchester, who was his relation; with a view of getting him in partner to a very busy, flourishing manufacture. The third he determined to bind for seven years to a very celebrated man in one of the most populous clothing towns in the west; who had united in his own person the several professions of apothecary, surgeon, man-midwife, bone-setter, tooth-drawer,

drawer, hop-dealer, and brandy-merchant. And by these several occupations Columella flattered himself that his sons would be secured from that tedium and disgust of life which he experienced, and which he had brought upon himself by a life of indolence and inactivity.

C H A P. XXIX

FROM this long, and, I am afraid, verbose narration, we cannot but remark the very different fates of Atticus and Hortensius, and of their friend Columella; and how much happier the situation of the two former is than that of the latter. Hortensius and Atticus pursued regularly the plan of life in which

which they at first engaged ; and discharged with diligence and assiduity the several duties of their professions ; and at a proper time of life, have married women of suitable fortunes, birth and education ; and now live respected in their several circles of neighbours and acquaintance. Whilst Columella, on the other hand, by too precipitate a retreat from the world to a life of ease and indolence, and by indulging himself in those liberties which privacy and a disregard to the censures of the world are too apt to produce, has involved himself in difficulties which he might easily have avoided ; and has forfeited that respectable character in life, which he was so well qualified to sustain.

In short, I believe we may be justified in forming this conclusion,
 “ That the busiest and most laborious man, in the most busy and most noisy part of the metropolis, will, (generally speaking) be found to live happier than the idle man can possibly do, in the most romantic rural retreat which nature has ever formed, or the richest poetical imagination ever described or conceived.”

Hic onus borret,

Ut parvis animis & parvo corpore majus :

Hic subit ac perfert.—Aut virtus nomen inane est,

Aut decus & pretium recte petit experiens vir.

HOR.

“ One dreads the burthen, for his strength too great ;

“ One boldly undergoes and bears the weight :

“ The man of business, sure, may justly claim

“ The prize, or virtue’s but an empty name.

ANONYMOUS.

C H A P.

C H A P. XXX.

THE Canon having now finished his tale, we were preparing to make our several remarks upon it. I could not but hear with regret of so bright a genius (as Columella seemed to be) quite dead to the world, and lost in obscurity, like a rose in the desert, or a diamond in the mine. I said, he put me in mind of Seneca's epitaph upon a friend who buried himself alive in his villa—

“ *Hic sicut est Vatias;*”

“ Here lives interr'd Servilius Vatia.”

The Kentish gentleman, however, was going to criticise his friend's tale with more freedom, but on a

sudden

sudden we found ourselves arrived at Speenhamland, at the sign of the *Carteblanc*, the end of our day's journey.

We were received in the gate-way by a gigantic figure of an host, with a stern countenance, who instead of expressing any joy at our safe arrival, or bidding us welcome, shewed us into a room with the air of a turnkey who is locking up his prisoners for the night.

We were a little dismayed at this cold reception ; but the Kentish gentleman standing at the parlour-door pronounced with a theatrical tone,

" There is no terror, Callus, in thy looks ; "

" For I am arm'd so strong in *apathy*,

" That they pass by me like the idle wind

" Which I respect not."

He

He then rung the bell with some authority, and bade the waiter desire old Holofernes, his master, to send us a tankard of negus, but not to squeeze any lemon into it; for that his *four* looks would furnish acid enough for an ocean of liquor.

After we had refreshed ourselves with the 'foresaid beverage, and whilst we were waiting with patience for our supper, "Well, says the Kentish gentleman to the Canon, now give me leave to ask, how you have spent your time these twenty years. I fancy by this round belly you have not lived the austere life of an hermit, upon roots and acorns, and the crystal brook."

C H A P.

C H A P. XXXI.

The Canon's Story.

"WHY," replies the Canon, "I was as fond of retirement in my youth, as Columella could be; and as soon as I had taken my degrees in the University, was going to settle, with great satisfaction, upon a curacy in the country.

"My elder brother, in order to fix me near him, had written me word that he had got me a very desirable piece of preferment of that kind in his own neighbourhood. Thirty pounds a year! and only two churches to take the care of, at a small distance from each other. I

C H A P.

had

had formed to myself an agreeable idea of retiring to a snug parsonage-house, with a good garden, and a pigeon-house; and pursuing my studies without interruption. In short, I had packed up my books and my little stock of Port wine, and was just prepared to set off, when I received another letter from my second brother, who was a merchant in London, and who thought the immense stock of learning which in seven years I must have amassed in the University, ought not to be buried in the obscurity of a country village. He insisted, therefore, upon my going to London, and engaging in a lectureship and curacy which he had a prospect of getting me in the city. In short,

I was appointed to a curacy, and chosen lecturer of Saint —— against a dozen candidates.

"Touching this election, I cannot forbear mentioning a circumstance, at which, tho' it shocked me at the time, yet I have since laughed very heartily.

"Amongst other voters, in the progress of our canvas my brother took me to wait on a working shoemaker. When we came into the shop, we found the man intent upon his work: but seeing two customers, as he thought, tolerably dressed, he rose up and bowed very respectfully; but upon my brother's telling him I was a candidate for the lectureship, and desired his vote, the disciple of Crispin resumed his seat; began hammering his sole, and

with a contemptuous air, replied,
Let's hear him preach first.

" I could not help repeating to myself what Dryden applies to a rascally mob, in one of his *eventful Tragedies.*

" Empire! thou poor and despicable thing;
" When such as these unmake or make a king!"

" After pursuing my occupation of curate and lecturer for a year or two, as I was one day in the coffee-house, I was addressed by the learned Mr. Mattaire, the famous editor of the classics ; with whom, as being a Westminster man, I had contracted some acquaintance. He asked me, whether I would accept of the office of tutor to a young gentleman in a nobleman's family ? Tho' I did not like the idea of such a dependent state, yet upon his mentioning

a Peer of the first rank, the late Duke of ——, the prospect was too flattering not to be accepted. By Mr. Mattaire's recommendation therefore, I went the very next day to wait on his Grace ; and was appointed tutor to Lord C——, a younger son of that noble family.

My pupil was a very amiable youth, but seemed to have very little relish for classical learning. After some time, therefore, it was proposed that I should attend him in a tour through France and Italy ; as perhaps he might be more inclined, thro' curiosity, to study the works of those authors in the country where they were written ; as he would hardly see an hill, or pass a river in Italy, which was not celebrated by some of the Roman poets.

" This

"This tour, you may imagine, was very agreeable to me ; as by the letters of recommendation which we carried with us, we were admitted to persons of the first rank in France and Italy. And it would probably have been attended with very desirable effects to my pupil ; as he frequently found subjects of literature introduced in good company ; and also that a knowledge of the classics and the poetical stories was necessary to understand the subject of the several paintings and statues, and other works, both of ancient and modern artists : but, alas ! these flattering hopes were defeated ; and I had the unhappiness to lose my pupil by an event which I had no reason to apprehend."

L 3

, Lord C—— was rather soberly inclined, and always very attentive to my admonitions, when uninfluenced by bad example ; but we sometimes met with young people of our own country who seldom failed to lead him into some little irregularities.

“ While we were at Naples, Lord A—— B—— lay for some time in the Bay with one of the King’s ships ; and my pupil and I were invited, with some more English gentlemen, to spend a fine summer’s evening aboard the man of war. As Lord A—— and Lord C—— had spent one or two evenings together on shore ; and as I knew there would be a jovial set of young people ; by way of diverting their attention a little from the bottle, I proposed to

Lord

Lord A——, with whom I was well acquainted, that, as we were upon classical ground, we should make a sort of classical evening of it; and introduce some of the convivial customs of the Romans into our entertainment. His lordship was pleased with the idea; and accordingly procured two or three settees, with cushions and pillows for his guests to *lie down* to table in the ancient manner; and also some chaplets of roses and myrtle; and having cast lots for the *arbiter bibendi*, or toast-master, the young people, in spite of my remonstrances, got tolerably drunk in the true classical style of the ancient Romans. I mention this trifling circumstance of my travels, because a very ill-natured use was

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afterwards made of it, to my disadvantage. ~~so as such~~ ~~but in upon~~
Lord C— found no ill effects, as I could perceive, from this entertainment: but whether it was owing to too free an indulgence in the grapes, and other fruit which the autumn produced in great plenty and perfection, or any other cause, he was soon after seized with a violent fever, which baffled the skill of the Neapolitan physicians, and proved fatal in a very few days.

After sending an express with this melancholy intelligence, and receiving orders to that purpose, I attended the body to England. Tho' our travels had been thus fatally concluded, on my return I was received by the family with marks of kindness and respect; and a very valuable

luable living becoming vacant at that juncture in the family, between one of the heiresses of which, and the Duke's eldest son, an alliance was just then concluded, I was presented to it, and very bountifully rewarded for about two years attendance in that truly noble family.

" Yet, to shew how cautious a young man in that capacity ought to be of his conduct, the trifling circumstance of my having set on foot that classical entertainment which I mentioned, was represented to the Duke, by some interested people, in a very unfavourable light, as if I had encouraged my pupil in drinking to excess, and occasioned his death; but his Grace had too much generosity to listen to so improbable a tale. I cannot but reflect, however,

on the fortunate concurrence of events which secured to me this preferment: for that very alliance, which, while it was in agitation, gave the Duke an opportunity of procuring it for me, would have prevented any application of that kind in a few months later; for this marriage of convenience was very soon succeeded by an unhappy divorce.

" As no one deemed higher of the nuptial state than I do, as soon as I was possessed of my preferment, I was determined to complete my felicity, if possible, by an amiable wife. But having been disappointed in one or two attempts of that kind, I at length met with a very fine woman, at a place of public resort, in the same predicament with myself; for her personal charms, un-

common

common as they were, had not had force enough, for want of a larger fortune, to secure the constancy of one or two young men, who had made some progress in gaining her affections, and then deserted her. So that, though we liked each other extremely well, yet I believe we came together without that violent warmth of affection and romantic fondness, which usually attend our first loves, and had our eyes sufficiently open to make a proper estimate of each other's merits; and were prepared to expect only that degree of happiness which is allotted to mere mortals, and so were not disappointed.

"A connection which I made with another young nobleman, when abroad, introduced me to the family whose interest procured me a canonry

in a church in the West; which makes an agreeable variety, and gives me an opportunity of meeting now and then an old acquaintance at Bath (the great thoroughfare from this world to the next): And in short, by doing my duty in my parish nine months in the year, and spending the winter months in a cheerful residence, I hope I live innocently, and am sure I live happily, and never find my time hang heavily upon my hands. If, like Columella, I had indulged my love of ease and retirement in my youth, I must probably have suffered for it in my old age: I should have inverted the order of nature; and by having been idle in the morning, which was destined for toil, I must have laboured in the evening.

evening of life, which was made for repose."

"Why," said I, "although I am no advocate for an indolent, inactive life; yet it shocks me to observe, how small a part of mankind are able to set bounds to their avaricious desires; and how few are contented with a competence, who are once in the road to affluence."

"They engage in some laborious employment, with a firm resolution perhaps, after they are arrived at a certain pitch of fortune, to retire and enjoy their acquisition: "*Ut in otia tuta recedant.*" But when they have gained their first point, they still persevere in their pursuits, with the same eagerness and solicitude as when they first set out."

"The lawyer, the physician, and even

even the divine, are continually aspiring to the highest pinnacle of their profession. The lawyer is not content with being merely a puise judge, but must be a Chief Justice at least, if not a Lord Chancellor; and though he finds his fatigue increase with his promotion, he yet labours on, till the palsy, the gout, or the stone, puts a stop to his career, and forces him to retire from business.

“ The physician, the more eminent he becomes, still drudges the more; and though perhaps he may have gained an ample provision for his family, now thinks himself obliged, *in conscience*, to employ that skill for the good of the public, which he has gained by experience, when labouring for his own emolument; and thus

thus sacrifices his own health and life perhaps, to preserve and prolong that of others.

"Neither do I suppose, Mr. Canon, though you seem so happy in your present situation, that you would be very *obstinate* in your "nolo episcopari," your refusal of a bishopric. And if once you were advanced to that painful pre-eminence, the idea of a translation would haunt you night and day, and you must bid adieu to your present ease and tranquillity of soul. In short, I believe it is not less difficult for most men to enjoy a fortune contentedly, than to acquire one."

"Amidst our plenty, something still
"For houses, horses, pictures, planting,
"To me, to thee, to him is wanting.
"That cruel something unpossess'd,
"Corrodes and leaves all the rest."

"I remember

"I remember a gentleman, who was the very last individual of a good family, which had been settled for many generations upon the banks of the Thames: but a considerable estate, of which they had been possessed, was now reduced to about 300/. a year. This the young man considered as by no means a sufficient competence; and having no inclination to farm his estate, or to engage in any learned profession, by the interest of some friends he was sent out in the service of the East India Company, and by the time he was forty had acquired near forty thousand pounds. He came home, re-purchased some part of the family estate, rebuilt the mansion-house, furnished it with India cabinets, china jars, josses, and mandarines;

rines ; laid out his pleasure-ground on the banks of the Thames ; and in short seemed to have nothing else to do, but to marry and to keep up his family, as he always wished, and was well-enough qualified in every sense to do, and enjoy a comfortable repose.

" But alas ! he had contracted an habit of acquiring and accumulating money, but had forgotten the true use of it ; and, unfortunately, a great man in his neighbourhood, who was connected with the first Lord of the Admiralty, having taken particular notice of our little nabob, the latter was tempted to make some use of his interest with his lordship, and got himself appointed the Purser to one of the King's ships, which was destined to protect our settlements.

settlements in India in the last war. This was one of the ships which was appointed to support the siege of Pondicherry, where our restless adventurer had his thigh taken off by a chain-shot, and thus put a period to a family, which he was so solicitous to restore to its ancient splendor; like a covetous gamester, who pursues his good fortune too far, till an unlucky cast deprives him of all his gains, and reduces him to his original state of indigence."

Our conversation was now interrupted by the appearance of supper, which was brought up by my landlord in person; who now did the honours of his house with a tolerably good grace; and upon a nearer survey, I was inclined to impute his first unpromising aspect rather to an

unhappy

unhappy system of features with which nature had endowed him, than to any murderous intentions, or to any real malignity of heart; nay, in spite of appearances, the Canon was convinced that mine host was a good-natured, honest fellow.

C H A P. XXXII.

WHEN we got into the post-coach the next morning, we found that our company was to be compleated by the addition of a lady who seemed to be about thirty. She was very fashionably dressed; and as she was getting into the coach, she charged the driver not to forget to stop at Hyde-park-corner, as their chariot was to meet her there. "Aye, aye, mistress," says Smack, "I shall stop of course at the White Horse

Horse Cellar, where your chariot
will find you, never fear!"

When the lady was now seated, she threw herself back into the corner of the coach ; observing, that these post-coaches were very agreeable things now and then, for a change.

"But," adds she, "I detest those common machines ; one meets with such vulgar, low-life company in them, there's no bearing it." "Yes," says the Kentish gentleman ; "they are now-a-days filled with nothing but footmen and *Abigail*s ; tho' I remember the time when gentlemen of the best fortune did not disdain to travel in them." Before the lady could reply (which indeed she was not disposed to do) the vouturier came again to the coach-door, with a large gilt bird-cage in his hand :

also H

hand : "Here, mistress," says he, "you must take this devil of a parrot yourself ; I cannot carry him upon the box ; he makes such a plaguy noise he'll frighten my horses."

Mrs. Abigail (for such this high-life lady really was) said positively she could not admit him into the coach ; for that they had been spending a fortnight at Oxford, and that the *menial servants* and the Oxford-scholars had taught Poll so much vulgar language, that she was not fit company for the gentlemen in the coach. Mrs. Nab however, after disputing the affair for some time, and the gentlemen not objecting to so cheerful a companion, thought proper to submit.

After a little conversation with the lady, we soon discovered that she was Mrs. Sacharissa Nonsuch's own

own maid, and that she had been sent by the post-coach on purpose to convey this prating domestic in his gilt cage; who, we soon found, had lately been taught all the ribaldry and the most indelicate monosyllables in the English language, and therefore Mrs. Sacharissa would not admit Poll of her own party.

We learned moreover from Mrs. Abigail (who, notwithstanding that little affectation, or rather natural desire, of concealing her servile situation, was a sensible girl) that Madam Sacharissa had been spending the autumn with Atticus and his lady, partly at Oxford, and partly at his country-house in that part of Berkshire.

When our companion found that the Canon knew something of the family,

family, she was very communicative ; and informed him that her lady had never been thoroughly reconciled to Miss Matilda's match with Hortensius ; but spent her summers either with Atticus and his lady, or with her brother at Non-such-house, when Hortensius and his wife were not there. She had condescended, however, to stand godmother to one of their children ; and it was thought she would leave her fortune equally between her two nieces, provided she herself died without issue ; of which (in every sense but one) there was now the utmost human probability.

C H A P. XXXIII.

THE presence of Mrs. Sacharissa's maid in our vehicle, of course put a stop to any further conversa-

conversation about the Canon's narrative. But when we came to the castle at Salt-hill to dinner, she was luckily acquainted with Mrs. Partridge, who invited her behind the bar : and we had time to resume the subject of Columella's distress ; and to express our hopes that the Canon would favour the Public with his narrative. To this the Canon made many weighty objections ; which I shall make the subject of

P R E F A C E.

CHAP. LXX.

ONE of the most sensible men, whom I was ever acquainted with, had adopted a system, which he supported with

conviction.

with many arguments from decency and convenience, that the part of our dress which is peculiar to the male sex (though sometimes usurped by ladies of spirit) ought to have the buttons behind instead of before.

In like manner, I will venture to assert, that in general the Preface ought to be placed at the end, instead of the beginning of a book; or, to avoid the appearance of a paradox, that what is usually said in the Preface ought to be deferred to the Postscript. Nor think, Sir, that I imitate Sterne in this or that; because he has introduced his Preface in the middle of his work, therefore I would place mine at the end. No, Sir; I should despise myself for adopting Sterne's oddities, as much as I do him for affecting the ribaldry and blackguardisms of Rabelais.

lais. But my reasons I think are obvious: Every one that takes up a new book is so impatient to enter into the subject of it, that he pays little regard to what the author, who is probably a stranger to him, has to say about himself, or his own private concerns.

But if we can once engage the attention of our reader, and interest him in the subject of our performance, he may then probably be inclined to listen to our apologies, or even eagerly peruse every trifling particular, which our self-love, or our delicate anxiety for our beloved offspring, may prompt us to disclose to the Public.

But thus much may suffice as a Preface to my Preface.

The Canon then, in answer to our importunities to oblige the world with

his narrative, pleaded first, that it was a mere jeu d'esprit, and not fit for the public perusal. "Calamo ludimus," says he, "I sketch these things with my pen for my amusement, as I would wish to do with a pencil, if I were as great an adept in painting as some of my friends are."

"But besides," adds he, "the Public is overwhelmed already with books of every kind, but especially with tales and novels; and I begin to think, that in time the world, in a literal sense, will not be able to contain the books that shall be written. Nay, a droll friend of mine imagines, that one reason why this terrestrial globe will be destroyed by fire, is, that a general conflagration will more effectually consume the infinite heaps of learned lumber
(with

(with which it was foreseen our libraries would be stored after the invention of printing) than any inundation, earthquake, or partial volcano whatsoever, could possibly do."

I replied, that as for the great number of books of this kind, he should consider, that both book-making and printing were, in general, useful trades; and that all trades have a right to a subsistence. But if only systems of Law, Physic and Divinity, Morality or Politics, were to be crammed down the throats of a squeamish Public, what a number of poor devils, not only poor authors, I mean, but poor printers' devils, and their smutty tribe, must keep a perpetual Lent throughout the year!

You may as well complain that the world

world is overstocked with snuff-boxes and tooth-pick cases, and that no trades but useful ones, butchers, bakers, tailors, and shoe-makers, ought to be tolerated in a well-regulated commonwealth.

The world is capricious and wants variety; they are tired of sermons and moral precepts, served up in the same tedious form. But maxims of life which are not new, or which are even so trite as to lose their effect, yet when tricked out in a more inviting dress, and set in a more amiable and striking light, may gain the attention of young people, who would not read even a *Spectator* or *Guardian* that was written fifty years ago.

On the Canon's urging the impropriety at least, if not the indecency, even of so humble a dignitary in the church

church being suspected for the author of what would probably be called a Romance; I told him, I would not insist on the well-known fact of a primitive Bishop having been the author of one of the first romances amongst the ancients, but would remind him of the very learned and pious Bishop Patrick in our own country, who had written a religious Romance called the Pilgrim. But, though his lordship had introduced some amusing particulars, and amongst the rest, the Hermit from Dr. Henry More, which Parnell has so elegantly adorned in verse; yet as the allegory lay so open, and as it abounded more in good sense and pious reflections than in incident, it was less interesting, and consequently had been less read, than John Bunyan, from whom the prelate took the hint. I added however, that
I could

I could not but think, if the same sentiments which abound in many of those godly dialogues between our Sebastians and Eudocias, Therons and Aspasias, were offered to the world in the form of a tale or novel, they would have a better chance for being more generally read. In short, I offered, if he would give me leave, to negotiate the affair with a very honest Printer, and to inspect the press.

The Canon would not come to any determination in the affair at present; but said, if I would call upon him at his lodgings in town, we might consult further about it.

Accordingly, the next day I waited on him; and we having by this time formed some kind of intimacy, he at length consented to my proposal, on condition of its being kept a profound secret

secret (for I found the Canon was well-known in the literary world for publications of much greater consequence.) He added, moreover, that he would give the profits of his publication (whatever they were) for the promoting useful knowledge and industry, to the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce ; and the first premium which he would recommend should be “ For the best discourse on the sufferings of post-horses, and other beasts of burthen ; with the best means of redressing them.” And the second, “ To the man who should discover an infallible remedy for a smoky chimney ; bring a certificate well-attested of his having repeatedly succeeded ; and that could demonstrate the truth of the principles upon which he proceeded in his operations.”

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F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Vol. I. p. 5. l. 5 of the note, read (*For whatever
Mr. G-bb-n, &c. down to complain of*) in the 8th
line, in a parenthesis.

— p. 207. l. 7. For *respecting*, read *repeating*.

Vol. II. p. 8. l. 11. For *Stour*, read *Stowe* (Lord
Temple's.)

— p. 241. l. 15. dele the semicolon after *that*.

A T A C H M E

18.00 m (60 m) of rough sand. The



